The Ostrekoff Jewels

The Detroit Free Press

Sunday, December 3, 1933

BY E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

INTO ONE of the splendid but bare reception rooms of the famous Ostrekoff Palace in Petrograd, its owners made sudden, almost precipitate entrance. A tall man—almost six feet four in his stockings—the Prince was a striking personage, with long black beard streaked with gray, deep-set but fiery black eyes, and thin, finely aquiline nose. His attire was disordered and perplexing. He wore the uniform of a general, but half of his ribbons were torn off, and the flowing cape which hung from his shoulders was merely the ordinary habiliment of a junior cavalry officer. His nostrils were quivering, his expression tense. He was engaged in a paroxysm of strained listening, his head a little on one side. A very human Anglo-American voice broke the silence, and the figure of a tall young man, broad-shouldered and powerful, emerged from the nearer of the great suite of rooms beyond.

"Trouble getting worse, Prince?" he asked anxiously.

The latter nodded, as he lowered his revolver and turned toward his questioner.

"The madmen have won," he announced, with angry bitterness. "The only man who might have saved Russia has preferred to save his own skin. He's in the Baltic by now."

Another voice—there had been people who had called it the most beautiful voice in the world—came from the dim recesses beyond, and Catherine, Princess Ostrekoff, advanced slowly into the room. For a moment, as she stood on the outskirts of obscurity, she seemed like an exquisite piece of tinted statuary. Her husband's grim face relaxed as he saw her.

"They are not hurrying," he confided to Wilfred Haven, the young American. "Why should they? There is a cordon around the city, and they know we cannot escape. They are only staying their hand to be early in the pillaging. They were tearing down the Museum as I passed. Today Russia is paying for the sins of the world."

Catherine Ostrekoff was as brave a woman as any of her Tartar ancestresses, but she loved life. There were many things upon her conscience and she wished to live.

"Is there nowhere we could hide?" she asked piteously. "Why should this rabble wish for our blood? The Ostrekoffs have always been the friends of the people."

"Of the peasants—not of this scum," her husband reminded her. "Come and look—you can judge for yourselves."

Even Haven, a young New Yorker of a particular masculine type, gasped as he looked down from the windows.

"Why, they're mad!" he cried. "This isn't a revolution—it's a herd of the devil's children broken loose."

"The poison has been festering for generations and the sewer holes are open at last," the Prince muttered savagely. "They're crazy with vodka and brandy, with license and the lust for blood. Look!"

Two men had met face to face in the middle of the street below. Question and answer flashed between them, there was a gleam of uplifted steel, and one of the two, with a terrible shriek which reached the ears of the three watchers at the window above the spitting of the guns and the dull sullen roar of human voices, threw up his arms and collapsed in a crumpled heap upon the road. His assailant only paused to withdraw his knife, wipe it on the other's clothes and kick the body out of the way. Then he broke into a fantastic dance in the middle of the

Please Turn to Page 2—Column 1

---Next Sunday

Wallace Irwin's Great Novel

NORTH SHORE

street—the dance of a trained ballet performer, as he probably was—interpreting, with fiendish precision, in those moments of madness, the bestial passions of life.

Wilfred Haven wondered more than once whether a touch of that same madness had not in those moments crept into the Tartar blood of the stern old aristocrat by his side. At any rate, he acted like a man possessed with some silent demon. He dropped on his knees and softly raised the window sash a couple of feet. A stinging blast of cold wind swept into the room. The Prince, for one, felt nothing of it, as cautiously his right hand, with its heavy burden, stole out of the window. He scarcely paused to take aim—in his youth he had been the champion revolver shot of the Russian Army—one angle pressure of his finger upon the trigger and the mad career of the fantastic dancer below was over. The Prince closed the window.

"Justice has been achieved once tonight, at any rate," he muttered.

"It was well done," the Princess approved.

FROM ONE of the lower windows of a tall, narrow house exactly opposite, which had been raided a few minutes before by a shouting and yelling mob, came suddenly a terrifying spectacle. The window was thrown open and a man leaned out, a shrieking woman in his clutches. He mocked at the crowd below, who rushed underneath the window and held out their arms. He shook his head.

"Nitchevo," he shouted. "Be patient, little brothers."

He drew back. The last thing to be seen was the lustful leer of the man as he disappeared.

"My God," Wilfred exclaimed, "I can't stand this."

The Prince gripped his arm.

"Do not be a fool," he enjoined sharply. "You might as well try to save a woman from drowning underneath the falls of Niagara."

In the midst of the turmoil came the chiming of the great clock from the cathedral. They all listened.

"Eleven," the Prince counted. "My young friend, we must part," he added, laying his hand, for a moment, upon Haven's shoulder.

"It's damnable, this!" Haven exclaimed passionately. "Look here, Prince, let's try the embassy."

Ostrekoff shook his head.

"The place is surrounded with spies," he said. "We shouldn't have one chance in a thousand. Besides, all your diplomatic privileges have been withdrawn, except the privilege of unmolested departure for yourselves, and that ends at midnight."

"I can't leave you here," the young man groaned.

The woman laughed at him. She used conversation as a camouflage.

"You must," she insisted. "You are undertaking a marvelous task for us as it is. I am afraid that you will have to face death many a time before it is over. As for us—Michael is a soldier, and I shall escape the ignominy of seeing the admirers of my youth slip into obscurity with the coming of wrinkles. A Russian or a French woman, you know, my dear Wilfred, without an admirer, is a woman upon whom the sun has ceased to shine. Michael," she went on, turning to her husband, "take our young friend down to one of the back doors. He would lose himself in this prison. Remember, Wilfred," she added, turning back to him, "you will be a marked man all the way across Europe. As soon as they discover that the jewels have been taken from the bank, they will guess that it is you who have them. They are everything that is left. They will be Elisaveta's sole fortune. You will find her very beautiful and she has a wonderful character. If you succeed, you will deserve whatever she may choose to give you, and if she gives you what I hope, it will be with my blessing. Now I am going to rest for a time."

The Prince led his young friend down the vast staircase almost in silence. The same thought was present in the minds of both of them. For generations this smooth marble surface had been pressed by the feet of Queens and Princesses, Kings and Ambassadors, the flower of the world's aristocracy. Now the whole place seemed abysmally empty, the stairs themselves slippery with dust, disfigured by the foul relics of an army of raiders with whom had departed practically the whole of the domestic staff. They came at last to a huge oaken door. The Prince paused before it.

"You have only to cross the street from here," he pointed out, "and you are at the Embassy. * * *

Wilfred," he added, looking into the other's rugged but sensitive face, "both Catherine and I have grown very fond of you during these last few years. I cannot help feeling, however, that we are asking too much. You are not of our country and these are not your troubles. You will risk your life many times, I fear, before you find Elisaveta."

"If I do what does it matter?" the young man protested lightheartedly. "I think you exaggerate the danger, sir. I do really. I have an Embassy bag, sealed with the good old U. S. stamp."

"I guess they won't interfere with that—waiting for me in a corner of the embassy safe. And, as for the chamois belt, they'll have to take my clothes away before they find that."

"Do your people know what is inside that belt and the embassy bag?" the Prince asked.

Wilfred Haven coughed.

"There's no one left to trouble about such things," he explained. "Old Hayes, the counselor, is nominally in charge, and he's nothing to do with the diplomatic side of affairs at all. The others are juniors like me, only more so."

"Besides, I shall own up and resign as soon as we are safe. I was going to do that, anyway. I want to get into the war. I've had enough of diplomacy."

"You mean that?"

"Word of honor," was the terse but fervent reply.

There was an expression of great relief on Ostrekoff's worn face.

"Tomorrow, when the bank is seized, as I know it will be, and they realize that the jewels are missing, there will be a hue and cry, not over all Russia, but over all Europe. Every likely person who has left the country lately will be followed and watched."

"You don't need to worry for one moment," Wilfred Haven persisted. "The Embassy seals will get us over the border, and after that the thing's easy."

"Elisaveta's address is in the letter with the jewels,' the Prince reminded him. "She is a very bad correspondent, I'm sorry to say; but the last time we heard from her she was in a studio in Florence. You will also find the address of her London bankers. And now farewell forever, my friend. Our death warrants were signed this afternoon."

FIFTY yards down a side street, dominated by the gigantic encircling wall of the Ostrekoff Palace, followed by one dash across the broader thoroughfare, and Wilfred Haven would have reached the compacative sanctity of the embassy, and his own quarters.

Unseen men and women were screaming and shouting—a constant wave of discordant sound like the baying of an innumerable pack of hellhounds. He shivered as he pushed onward, desperately anxious to escape from the hideous clamor.

Suddenly, the blood seemed to rush to his head. Opposite to him was the tall, narrow house with the flaming windows, and from behind the lower one, where the lights had been extinguished, came floating out once more half-stifled moans of agony and appeal, the cry of that still tortured woman. * * *

Every instinct of Haven's nature rejected and discarded the cautionary whispers of his brain. He traversed the remainder of the boulevard in a dozen strides. He sprang across the paved yard, mounted the steep flight of steps, and pushed his way past the front door, which had been half torn from its hinges and lay at a perilous angle upon its side. Here, in the main hall of the house, he paused a moment, breathless. All around him were evidences of wild pillage. From the upper rooms came the clamor of shouting, drunken voices, the smashing of glass, disorder and riot rampant, a nightmare of furious license. He flung open the tottering door and pushed his way inside.

It was a scene of wild confusion into which he stepped. In its center was a long table laden with more empty bottles, plates and debris of various kinds, and—most tragical sight of all—in the far corner, nearer to the window, a girl, bound with stout cords to a heavy easy chair.

Her dark, almost black hair had become disordered as though in a struggle and there was a long stain of blood on her face. Her cheeks were ghastly pale, her already red-rimmed eyes were flaming with terror. Her once fashionable gray dress was torn and dishevsled. There was blood on her finger tips where she had been plucking at the cords.

"Brutes!" he cried. "Don't struggle. I'll have you out of that in a moment."

He added a word of reassurance in Russian while he searched his pockets for a knife. To his amazement she answered him, chokingly, but in unmistakable English.

"A knife? There, by the sideboard—hurry."

He followed the slight movement of her head. A rudely fashioned peasant's knife lay among the bottles, already wet and suggestively stained. He picked it up and, falling on his knees, hacked at the cords which bound her.

Suddenly they heard the dreaded sound—heavy, stumbling footsteps on the stairs. Whoever she was, he thought afterward, it must have been a fine impulse which prompted her whisper.

"Better go" she faltered. "The house is full of them—they will kill you."

One more twist of the knife and she was free. He stood up. She too staggered to her feet, but at first attempt sank back into the chair. Nevertheless, she was standing once more by his side when he turned to face the owner of the footsteps. The latter came blundering into the room true to type, a large bestial-looking man, his cheeks flushed with drink, his eyes hungry with lust. He stopped short by the table shouting and yelling wild Russian oaths.

Haven wasted no breath in words but, when he saw the newcomer's long hairy fingers groping toward his belt, he rushed in before he could reach his knife, struck up the hand with his right fist and got home with his left upon the chin. The man was of sturdy build, however, and although he was momentarily staggered, he held his ground and persisted in his efforts to reach his knife. Haven, ducking low, ran in once more, hit him under the jaw this time and sent his victim crashing into a pile of broken furniture.

"Come on," he shouted to the girl. "Here, I'll help you."

He passed an arm round her waist and drew her into the passage.

"Pull yourself together if you can," he implored. "They're coming down the upper stairs now. If they see us, heaven knows how we shall get away. We've only a few steps to go if you can stick it out."

Behind the stairs creaked and groaned with the weight of the howling mob which had turned the corner and come suddenly into view. They had found drink, and they had found booty of a sort, but they wanted the girl.

"Listen" he begged breathlessly, "turn to the left here—up the boulevard you understand. Twenty yards only and then again to the left. Fifty yards down the street and there's an iron gate—back away to the American Embassy. Hide there in the garden till I come."

"And if you do not come?" she faltered.

"If I don't come, it'll be because a dead man couldn't help, anyway," he rejoined swiftly. "You must bang at the doors then and perhaps they'll let you in. If you want to help me now—run."

She obeyed him, although her knees were trembling and her limbs quivering with fear. She tottered down the paved way toward the street, where the darkness hid her almost at once from sight.

HAVEN faced the angry crowd, now within a few yards of him.

"Get back, my friends," he shouted in Russian. "I am an American and I am not worth following. The girl is English. It pays to leave us alone."

They answered with a chorus of jeers and began to move stealthily toward him.

One of them, who had almost the appearance of a monk, whirled a great knotted stick above his head ferociously, and they all cheered him on. Wilfred Haven set his teeth. This was the end, then. He shot his would-be aggressor through the chest, just as the blow was about to descend, never doubting but that the rest of them would be upon him like a pack of mad dogs.

Retreating slowly, Haven kept his gun outstretched, meaning to gain time for the girl and to sell his own life as dearly as possible. For the moment, however, a miracle seemed to have happened. He was completely ignored. The savage-looking mob seemed to have forgotten their lust for blood and pillage; they were gathered around the body of the dead man, weeping and lamenting like children. Every moment Haven's eyes opened wider in amazement. Then he realized his good fortune and fled.

Incredible though it appeared to him, he passed out of the gate and along the boulevard without a single pursuer. A few yards down the cross street he caught up with the girl leaning against the high railings and partly unconscious. She tottered toward him, and he half carried, half dragged her through the gate he had indicated, into the gardens. Inside and behind the shadow of some shrubs, he paused for a moment to listen. The tumult in the center of the city continued unabated but nearer at hand everything seemed peaceful. He led her along a gravel path toward a formidable-looking door which he opened with a Yale key. As soon as they were both inside, he slammed and bolted it. For a time, at any rate, they were in safety.

"Well, what do you know about that?" he demanded of no one in particular as he leaned against the wall, recovering his breath.

Her eyes sought his, eyes of a wonderful deep blue, almost violet, eyes that were pathetically eloquent with gratitude.

"You have been wonderful," she told him. "What I should have done without you!"

"We're in a terrible muddle here because we're clearing out tonight, but the Russian servants always keep some tea going and there's plenty of wine or brandy. I'm going to lay it upstairs and get a drink myself, as fast as I can."

"You will not leave me in this city?" she begged.

He looked at her thunderstruck. The possible consequence of his act of chivalry occurred to him for the first time.

"But—but, my dear young lady," he pointed out, "don't you understand we're quitting? We're off across the frontier tonight—unless they change their minds and throw us into prison instead."

She smiled at him once more.

"Across the frontier," she confided, "is just where I want to go."

Without a doubt, the most thrilling moment of that hectic and amazing journey out of Russia arrived when Walter Pearson, a youth of 22 and the junior member of the counselor's staff, suddenly drew back from his place, half out of the window, and made a portentous announcement. He pointed to the line of lights in the distance toward which the train was lumbering.

"The frontier!"

John Hayes, the counselor and senior member of the little party, who was smoking a long cigar, was apparently the least interested. Rastall, the third secretary, the whole of whose personal belongings had been looted at the railway station before leaving, was still searching for fresh oaths and remained entirely indifferent. Wilfred Haven, who was conscious of the warm pressure of a chamois leather belt around his waist, and to whose left wrist was attached, by means of a chain, the embassy bag by his side, shivered with excitement as he realized that the actual commencement of his great adventure was close at hand. What the girl felt was not easily discerned, but there was a vague shadow of apprehension in her eyes. She drew nearer to her companion.

"This is a terrible journey," she murmured. "If only we were safe on the other side!"

The girl sighed. Here eyes were fixed almost in terror on that encircling row of twinkling lights.

"So long as they let us pass," she murmured. "Any country in the world, but never again Russia!"

"I think you'll find they'll be glad enought to get rid of us," Haven assured her. "If they're going on as they've begun, they won't want foreigners around."

The long train rumbled over a bridge, which was apparently in course of repair, and almost immediately came to a standstill. They were in what appeared to be a temporary station—a long shed-like building with a rude platform. A blaze of lights about a quarter of a mile farther down the line seemed to indicate the real whereabouts of the depot.

"What the mischief is this place?" John Hayes growled.

Haven let down the window to look out, but the rain and turned to sleet, and an icy wind set them all shivering. He pulled it promptly up again.

"Can't see anything anyhow," he announced. "No good worrying. Let's wait and see what happens."

AN HOUR passed without any sign of movement. Suddenly there was a stir. A man in some sort of a military uniform, with red sash around it, stood over a station attendant whilst he unlocked their door.

"Passports," the officer demanded.

Counsellor John Hayes, as became his position, took command of the situation.

"We are the last of the staff of the American Embassy in Petrograd," he announced. "Here is my passport. I am official counselor-in-chief. One of these young men is my assistant, the other two are junior secretaries. The young woman is an English typist."

The man glanced casually at the passports and handed them back.

"Your passports are in order," he conceded. "You are free to leave the country and stay out of it. As for your bags, however, that is different. All luggage must be examined."

"You can tell your superiors that we claim diplomatic privileges," Hayes directed a little pompously.

"Who cares what you claim?" was the scornful reply. "Those days have gone by. I shall report the presence of the bags. They will probably be confiscated."

He turned his back upon them. The two soldiers shouldered their rifles and the cavalcade moved on, the station attendant having locked the door.

"Tell me what you have in your bag."

He laughed at her, recovered as though by magic from his depression and fatigue.

"My love letters," he confided.

She made no comment. Her eyes studied the outline of the bag and a faint, incredulous smile parted her lips. Then she drank her wine and for the first time a shade of color crept into her cheeks.

"Well, that's done you good, anyway, young lady," the counselor remarked graciously. "By the way, I haven't heard your name yet."

"My name is Anna Kastellane," she confided.

He handed her over a carefully made sandwich.

"Now let's see what you can do to that, Miss Kastellane," he said.

She took it between her slim, delicate fingers and bit into it with an appetite which was near enough to voracity.

"So many women have written you letters?" she reflected. "I am sorry."

He laughed light-heartedly.

"I've been in St. Petersburg for three years," he reminded her.

"They are all from one woman?" she persisted.

"I will tell you their history," he promised, "the first night we drink a glass of wine together in a neutral country."

With groaning and creaking and jerking of couplings, which sent every one momentarily off his balance, the long train started again on its crawl westward.

"Here's a long farewell to the foulest country on the earth," some one cried.

The Counselor, who had been looking out of the window, resumed his seat.

"A little premature, young man," he remarked. "That's only a temporary station we've been in—kind of rehearsal for the real thing. The frontier is on the other side of that great semicircle of lights."

Wilfred Haven groaned.

"Are you sure about that, sir?" he asked eagerly. "Those two men certainly belonged to the customs and there was no doubt about the passport officer."

"Positive," was the uncompromising reply. "I've done this journey a great deal oftener than you youngsters, and I can assure you that we're still on Russian soil. When you hear the whistle blow and we leave the next station, you can shout yourselves hoarse."

Haven seemed to have lost his appetite. He laid down his roll and took a long gulp of the wine. The girl by his side watched him curiously.

"Why are you so anxious about the customs?" she teased him. "Love letters are not dutiable."

Haven seemed to have forgotten her very existence. His eyes were fixed upon that growing semicircle of lights. Apprehension was fastening itself upon him.

Inside the covered station, pandemonium seemed to have merged into bedlam. They gazed out of the window at the seething mob in consternation.

"Say, look at the three musketeers!" Walter Pearson called out.

They gazed in astonishment at the three gigantic figures who towered head and shoulders above the mob which surged around them. They wore long, semi-military overcoats, Cossack turbans and high

boots clotted thickly with snow and mud, as though they had recently arrived from a journey. All the time it seemed to Wilfred as though by slow but powerful pressure they were drawing nearer to the railway carriage.

The attention of the little party was suddenly distracted. The officer who had entered their carriage at the last stopping place presented himself again, followed by one of the soldiers.

The officer raised a whistle to his lips. The sound of groaning and shrieking came from the corridor as the advancing soldiers forced their way through the crowd.

"The Government of Russia recognizes no diplomatic privileges," he insisted. "Your bags will be taken from you by force unless you open them."

The counselor shrugged his shoulders. All papers of importance had either been destroyed within the last few days or sent home a month before. One by one he unlocked his bags. They contained nothing but packets of worthless papers or articles of clothing and food.

The official pushed the bags and their contents away from him contemptuously. He pointed to the satchel chained to Haven's wrist.

"Unlock that," he ordered.

Haven rose to his feet. His right fist was clenched and there was murder in his eyes. To fail so soon in his enterprise! It was incredible.

"I'll be damned if I do," he answered.

"The contents of this bag are not my property," he declared. "I have promised to defend them with my life and I shall do so. You can murder an American official, if you think it worth while."

His right hand jerked out of his overcoat pocket. With his elbow doubled into his side and his automatic held in a steady grip he stood for a brief period of madness, his finger upon the trigger.

At that moment and during the moments that followed, Wilfred Haven certainly thought that madness had enveloped him and that he had passed into the world of oblivion.

THE outside door of the compartment, against which he planted his back, had suddenly been opened, and he had fallen into the grasp of two of the huge men whom they had seen battling their way through the mass of people. He was between them now, their hairy overcoats pressed against him, the weight of their bodies all the time forcing him on. In front was the third man, swinging his arms to right and to left clearing a way for him through that surging mass of humanity.

Exactly opposite the door a large automobile was waiting, with flaring lights. Haven, notwithstanding his great strength, was literally thrown inside. Two of his three guardians mounted with him into the interior, the third took his place by the side of the immovable chauffeur, who appeared to be merely a mass of furs. In a few seconds they were off, bumping across the yard, out of the iron gates.

"Where the hell are you taking me?" he demanded.

The man opposite to him shook his head. The one by his side, however, answered at once in correct but gutteral English.

"We are obeying orders," he announced. "There will be no danger for a quarter of an hour. American gentleman had better take a drink of this."

He produced a huge flask and filled a small silver cup full of brandy. Haven drank it to the last drop.

"Look out of the window ahead," his companion invited.

He obeyed, although the snowflakes stung his cheeks and the icy wind nearly sucked away his breath. Far away down the straight road, several miles ahead, was a huge electric-light standard, the unshaded globe of which was like a ball of white fire.

"Poland," the giant confided. Where the light flares, it is the end of Russian territory. There we shall be stopped for what we take out of the country. Just beyond, where the red light shines, are the Polish customs. Both are very dangerous to us."

"No way round, I suppose?"

"There is no way round," was the uncompromising reply. "The country for miles here is a marsh. Under the lights are sentinels. The Russians will fire at us, we shall fire back at them. From the Poles, we have, I think, so much to fear."

They seemed to be nearing, if not a town, some sort of a settlement. The lights flashed past them. Suddenly they came within the arc of that great white circle of illumination. There was a challenge, unanswered—a shout—a shot—then a fusillade of shots. The side windows of the car were smashed to pieces and Haven felt his cheek cut by one of the flying fragments.

They were outside the circle of the white light now, traveling at a tremendous pace, swaying from side to side of the road, surrounded by a perfect tornado of snow thrown up by the wheels. The bullets from behind were coming more scantily. A single challenge reached them from underneath the red light. The men in the car withheld their fire and passed safely.

Haven lit a cigaret and addressed himself to his English-speaking friend.

"Now look here," he began firmly, "you're giving me a jolly good run for my money and I must admit that you got me out of a nasty hole at the railway depot, but who are you? How do you come to be mixed up in my affairs? For whom are you doing this?"

The man by his side was unexpectedly solemn.

"We are Ostrekoff men," the former confided. "Three brothers. Alexis is my name, Ivan there, Paul outside. We have formed the bodyguard of His Highness since he become Chief of the Imperial Household. Before that we were rangers here on His Highness' estatee in Poland and down in Georgia. Those days are over. Russia is a lost county. This is the last time we work for our master."

Haven felt a new and delightful sense of security.

"And where are you taking me now?" he asked.

Alexis suddenly sprang up, threw down the window and looked out. He talked rapidly to the driver and their speed diminished. Presently they turned abruptly to the right, continued for about a mile along a villainous wagon track, and stopped. There was no building to be seen, not a house anywhere in sight, nothing but a bare, barren plain. Then lights flashed out scarcely a dozen yards ahead of them, and, drawn up by the side of the road, they saw another and even larger automobile. Alexis waved his hand in triumph.

"DESCEND, Master," he begged Haven. "It is here we change."

"And afterward?" Haven asked, as he buttoned his coat up to his throat.

"An hour's drive and then there will be safety. Wait till Paul has cleared the snow, then descend."

A spade had been produced and a way made clear. Quickly everything was transferred to the other car. Then they all turned their attention to the deserted one. On the right-hand side of the road was a drop of about 12 feet into the marshes. The driver turned the wheel, the three giants pushed. In a few seconds the great vehicle slid over and fell with a crash of breaking glass and splintering woodwork. With less than 10 minutes' delay they were off along the new road, traveling more slowly now but also more smoothly.

At the end of about half a mile they pulled up in front of a square stone house of great size. Alexis sprang to the ground. The others tumbled out after him.

"We are arrived!" Alexis exclaimed. "American Master will be glad. There will be fire and food. It is a great journey we have made."

Strange-looking peasant servants opened the door and came out, bowing and curtseying. One, who seemed to have something of the dignity of Alexis and his brothers, and was evidently a sort of major-domo, led Haven across the stone hall to a great dining room, bare except for an enormous table and a score or more of fine oak chairs, all emblazoned with the Ostrekoff arms. The walls were paneled with some ancient wood which showed everywhere signs of decay. At the farther end was a musicians' gallery, empty and dilapidated. The place was marvelously heated by an immense stove set in front of a fireplace upon which an ox might easily have been roasted.

"Where are we?" Haven inquired.

"It is the shooting lodge of an estate belonging to His Highness," Alexis explained.

Later on, after dinner, in a room almost as large as the banquet hall and on a bed the size of a tent Haven slept like a log. Outside on the landing with his back to the door Alexis, with his gun on his knees, also ate his stew; downstairs, in the center of the hall facing the front door, Paul, too, with a rifle by his side, ate his stew and watched.

Morning dawned without visible signs of its coming. Huge banks of black clouds still held the earth in darkness. Haven sat up in bed with a shiver. Alexis was busy piling logs into the stove. He looked around with a cheerful smile.

"All day long it will snow," he announced. "It is good. Tracks lost no one will find."

"But who do you suppose is looking for us here?" Haven inquired.

Alexis drew a little nearer to the bedside. His expression became grave.

"Early this morning," he confided, "we had word by telephone that a body of Russian revolutionaries had crossed the frontier. They come by order of Starman, the peasant miller, the man who is now sacking Petrograd. They have special passports, with an appeal to the authorities here; they come in search of you—American Master."

"Good God!" Haven exclaimed. "What about pushing on?"

Alexis shook his head ponderously.

"Too much snow," he said. "Here they will not find us. We are hidden. The world is hidden. The road along which we traveled is part now of the marshes."

"What about telephoning to the nearest barracks?" he suggested. "Russian revolutionaries have no right this side of the frontier."

"Telephone went at 5 o'clock this morning," Alexis announced. "Either broken or cut 10 minutes after we received our message. Paul has been out to examine. He thinks cut."

The fire was roaring in the stove. Haven turned over in the bed. He felt the belt around his body, he patted the satchel chained to his wrist.

"I suppose you know best," he muttered drowsily and slept once more.

Haven awoke from an aftermath of sleep marvelously refreshed and acutely aware of a strange happening. It was the distinct creck of a rifle, which seemed to come from immediately below his window. He slipped from his bed and peered out. Some 40 yards away, from the center of a circle of what, in the summer time, might have been turf, a youth in the costume of a Russian peasant but wearing a gray military overcoat, was crawling on all fours. Under the trees of the avenue a little gathering of men were moving restlessly to and fro, talking and arguing together. Presently one of them emerged with a white handkerchief tied to the end of a stick. He paused to speak to his comrade, who was now limping back to shelter, and helped him for a few yards in his progress. Then he approached the house, waving his white flag vigorously.

"Who will speak with me?" he called.

Haven was on the point of completely opening the window, in order to hear better what was going on, when he felt a couple of mighty arms around his waist.

"The master must not show himself," Alexis insisted. "It is for him they come, this rebbie."

"Are these the men you spoke of?" Haven asked. "Who are they? Where do they come from?"

"They have crossed the frontier after you," was the grim reply. "They are Russian revolutionaries, men of Starman the miller."

"But they can't follow me here," Haven objected. "This is Poland."

Alexis shook his head.

"The great war wages," he said solemnly. "Men do strange things. There is Starman, and there a little Jew who loves money, fighting for power in Petrograd."

Alexis lifted the window sash a few more inches and Haven, kneeling down, listened.

"We tell no lies," he heard Ivan say. "We are not men who deal with anything but the truth. We are Russians as you are and we love our country as you do. But we have with us one who is in our charge—an American who carries with him papers belonging to his country. Him we shall conduct to safety, as we promised to our only and great master—the noble Prince Ostrekoff."

The man who stood feet deep in the snow chuckled. He had an evil face, a mouth like the mouth of a fox, narrow eyes and straight black hair almost reaching to his shoulders.

"You have no noble master," he jeered. "Michael Ostrekoff was sentenced to be shot yesterday in the fortress by order of the new Government. He chose to blow out his own brains. Wise man! There were many who would have been glad to kick the corpse of an Ostrekoff."

"Then the new Government may stew in hell before I stir a finger to help it," was Ivan's fierce reply. "Be he dead or alive, we carry out our master's orders. You have crossed the frontier and broken the law. Soon the Poles will be here to whip you and you will wish then that you'd stayed where you belong."

"We waste breath," the man in the snow declared, with signs of wicked temper in his expression and tone. "Give up the young American and what he carries with him, or we will set fire to the house and massacre every one within it."

Ivan, with a gesture of contempt, turned around and strode back into the house. The emissary of the marauding band made his difficult way to the shelter of the avenue. The conference was at an end.

ALMOST as soon as Ivan had reached the lodge, three shots rang out from the lower part of the house. The three foremost figures in the line of invaders sank slowly into their bed of snow. Alexis scarcely glanced out of the window.

Half a dozen of the invaders were almost flush with the house. Alexis was crawling like a bear on three legs across the floor, with the butts of two rifles under his free arm. He peered over the sill.

The muzzle of his rifle stole downward. There were three men below, all of different heights, all closing in upon the angle of the house. Alexis' rifle spat out and the first one fell. The second one followed him in a matter of seconds. A bullet from the third sped through the window only a few inches above Alexis' head and buried itself in the wall.

The semicircle was broken and the attackers had withdrawn to the shelter of the avenue.

A fantastic week! Haven was never able to take real count of it or to realize the swiftly passing days.

Just before the coming of dusk on the sixth day Alexis, who was standing on duty outside the door of the great dining room, made hasty and, for him, unceremonious entrance. Through the trees of the avenue came red flashes of flame, there was the thud of horses' hoofs, hoarse, unintelligible cries, the crackle of Maxims and the yell of dying men. Alexis watched long and anxiously. Then he closed the window.

"It is a massacre," he announced. "A company of Polish cavalry with Maxims in motorwagons."

"Bravo!" Wilfred Haven exclaimed. "Now perhaps I shall be able to make a move."

There was no answering gleam of satisfaction on Alexis' face.

They heard the trampling of horses below and the sound of heavy knocking at the great front door.

"If these are Polish cavalry," Haven expostulated, "why can't I go down and introduce myself to the officer in charge?"

"Little Master," Alexis confided, his tone suggesting the disquietude which was stirring in his brain, "one sees only so far as one's eyes allow, but as it is with me, so it is with Ivan and Paul. We are greatly worried. There is disturbance everywhere. Discipline seems to be at an end. The men who have taken up their quarters in the outbuildings here are drinking and shouting and singing songs which have nothing to do with war or patriotism. They have posted no sentries. It seems as though the licence of the world across the frontier had reached them, too. They are under the command of a Col. Patinsky who once shot here as His Highness' guest."

"They are friendly, I suppose?"

"This Patinsky asks me particulars of the young American diplomat, with the satchel chained to his wrist, who left the train at the junction and traveled here under our charge. How did he know of that? Of your presence in this lodge he might hear from the mob they have been fighting, but no more than that. How did he know of our journey and of our mission?"

"Beats me," the young American confessed.

"Patinsky, who is in command of this troop of cavalry and who is under this roof at the present moment, is not a man to be trusted." His Highness threw him out for cheating at cards four years back.

"Do you suppose," Haven asked bluntly, "that he knows exactly what my mission for His Highness is?"

"Spies have been at work," was the grave but evasive reply. "We have not brains, we three, only strong arms, sharp swords and a gift of shooting so that we kill. The next hours may be for us—this one is the master's."

Wilfred Haven rose to his feet.

"What about seeing him here and now?" he suggested.

"It would be the best," Alexis acknowledged his eyes fixed steadily upon the satchel. "I think," he added, "that the Little Master should be prepared for anything that might happen."

Haven carried the satchel into the small anteroom, locked the door, and returned with the key in his pocket.

"Let us know the worst," he enjoined, waving his hand toward the door. "Bring in Patinsky."

The knock at the door came at last. There followed a faint click and the panel rolled back. A thin, dark man clad in the uniform of a Polish cavalry regiment entered the room, followed by Alexis. Wilfred Haven rose to his feet and the other approached with outstretched hand.

"You are Mr. Haven," he said, "late of the American Embassy at Petrograd? I am Colonel Patinsky. At your service."

"Very glad to meet you," Haven replied, pointing to a chair. "Won't you sit down?"

"You are very kind."

"We have to thank you, I hear, Colonel, for driving off that mob of revolutionaries," Haven observed. "But for you, I think they meant to sack the place, rob us of our supplies and drive us out into the snow."

"You owe me no thanks at all," Patinsky replied in grave and measured English. "We are on Polish soil. It was my duty. Besides, any friend or protege of my late friend, Prince Ostrekoff, is welcome to any aid I can offer. I have enjoyed the Prince's hospitality more than once under this roof. You will permit me?"

"What lucky chance brought you this way?" Haven enquired.

Patinsky smiled gently.

"We are under orders to patrol the frontier," he pointed out. "Raids of this character were to be expected. This mob of revolutionaries, who seem for the moment to have gained the upper hand in Russia, care nothing about the frontiers or," he added, after a moment's significant pause, "about diplomatic privileges."

"So I have already discovered," Haven commented.

"You will not object," Patinsky went on courteously, "to a few questions which I must ask in my official capacity?"

"Not in the least. Go right ahead," the other invited.

"One is permitted to inquire, then, the reason why you, the official representative of a country friendly to our own, were forced to leave the train at the frontier and take refuge here, instead of pursuing your journey in peace?"

Haven stretched out his hand, took a cigaret from the box tapped it upon the table and lit it.

"The station," he confided, "was in the hands of a crazy mob. They were all blood-red Communists of the worst type. Possibly they believed I had documents incriminating some of their leaders in Petrograd in my dispatch box. At any rate, they wanted to search it."

"I see," Patinsky murmured, in his silky voice. "And sooner than gratify their curiosity you made, I understand a dramatic escape from the station."

"You might call it so," Haven assented.

"With the help of His Highness' amazing bodyguard," Patinsky continued meditatively.

"That is so."

"I am interested in that frontier incident," the Pole observed. "The mob might naturally imagine, or their leaders might imagine, that you were bringing away papers of great importance in the satchels they wished to search. Knowing you to be a protege and a close friend of the Prince's, they might even go so far as to imagine that you had stretched the bounds of diplomatic privileges and were taking royalist property or communications out of the city."

"I have no means of knowing what was in their thoughts," Haven replied coldly. "I only know that they were a damned unpleasant crowd."

A SOMEWHAT curious silence reigned for a few minutes.

"You would perhaps be surprised to know," the Colonel went on, "that there were very definite rumors down the line. It was, in fact, openly stated that you were taking out of the country property belonging to Ostrekoff."

"An absurd rumor," Haven observed. "We are not allowed to use our privilege in that way."

"There are still many miles of wild country to traverse before you

could call yourself in safety. If it were true that you were in such a position, you would do well to make friends with those whom chance has placed in the position of being able to defend you."

Haven followed his companion's example and helped himself, only much more moderately to whisky.

"I'm not in particular need of help," he declared. "I am in a friendly, I might almost say an allied country."

"It may be true," Patinsky admitted, "that you are in a friendly country — politically — but there is this unfortunate circumstance to be reckoned with. You are in a very wild strip of it. Nobody knows where you are. Anything might happen to you and no one would know for certain where it happened — or who was responsible."

"ARE YOU threatening me?" Haven asked.

Patinsky shrugged his sboulders

"I should not put it like that," he objected, and his voice had become soft and gentle as a woman's "On what charge would you make me a prisoner?" Haven inquired "I am an American citizen with an American passport and carrying American dispatches."

Patinsky smiled very amiably

"How well it sounds ' he observed "But if those dispatches, my friend, instead of being letters and documents should turn out to be jewels of priceless value — the Ostrekoff jewels, for instance—being conveyed —very improperly conveyed, by the by—to a place of safety on behalf of your late friend, Prince Ostrekoff, then your position becomes a little more—I think your word is—assailable."

"What the hell business is it of yours?" Haven asked

"The question is bluntly put," Patinsky complained, "but I will reply to it. A few years ago I was a guest in this shooting lodge for purposes of sport. We played cards and there was a debt owing to me. The Prince has never paid"

"Do you expect me to believe a story like that?" Haven demanded angrily.

'Does it matter very much whether you believe it or not?" was the equable reply. "You are here in charge of property belonging to the late Prince I am sure that he would be delighted to hear that his debt has been paid How does that proposition sound to you?"

"Rotten," was Haven's brief comment.

Patinsky rose to his feet

"Then I will put the matter before you so that only a dolt could fail to understand it," he said, and this time there was an open sneer in his tone. "You are trying to take the Ostrekoff jewels across ta London or Paris I am here to stop you doing it—I and my soldiers I shall certainly kill you rather than allow you to leave this place with the jewels. Be sensible Sit down and drink with me. Open the bag and let us look at them I have a weakness for jewels. If ever there was a tradesman in my family I think that he must have been a jeweler."

Haven reflected for a brief space of time At the moment Patinsky had the advantage of him, The latter's left hand was on the butt of some sort of pistol or revolver and he had also his short cavalry saber. Haven's own automatic was uneasily resting in his pocket and he was utterly unused to a quick draw He threw himself back in his chair and, abandoning any attempt at reaching his gun, poured himself out more whisky and filled the other's glass.

"How am I to know," he complained, "whether that cock-and-bull story of yours about a gambling debt is true?"

Patinsky drew a revolver of old-fashioned type from his holster, leaned forward in his chair and laid it upon his knee

"You come from a very uncultured people, Mr. Haven," he said calmly, "and you have not yet learned the language which prevails in circles higher than your own. One does not speak of a 'cok-and-bull' story—whatever that may mean—to an officer bearing arms, nor, if one values one's life, does one accuse him of having told a falsehood.

Haven glowered at the speaker across those few feet of space.

"I don't need you to give me lessons," he muttered sullenly. "I wonder what really did take place when you were here on that hunting trip?"

The Fatal Word

For the first time Patinsky showed signs of some slight emotion. A small spot of color stole into his cheeks and there was a hard glitter in his eyes.

"I have told you," he said, "that when I left the Prince owed me money which he has never yet paid."

"There wasn't a little matter of cheating, was there?" Haven asked with an ugly sneer.

The effect of the latter's words and tone was exactly what he had hoped. Patinsky sprang forward from his chair and in a second the younger man was upon him. Out of reach of his weapons, Patinsky was little more than a child in Haven's grip. The latter held his wrists together with one hand and with the other upon the back of his neck pushed him toward the window From there he summoned Alexis, who entered the room with a look of dismay as he saw Patinsky writhing and squirming in the "Little Master's" grasp

"I couldn't help it, Alexis,' Haven declared. "He was after us, all right He says that the Prince owes him money."

"The lie should have choked him." Alexis thundered 'Still, one must reflect. In a few seconds he will be dead—if Little Master is not careful"

Haven relaxed his grip on his antagonist's neck There was a dark shadow on Patinsky's face, his breath came in short gasps

"You shall be shot for this," he faltered. "Shot before you leave this place"

Haven laughed scornfully, but Alexis was still looking worried

"What are we going to do with him?" the former asked

Patinsky's eyes were fixed longingly upon his revolver

"Let me go!" he gurgled

They dragged him to a chair Haven brought him whisky, which he drank greedily. He was obviously incapable of moving. Alexis, with a deep sigh, went to a cupboard and returnsd, bearing a roll of cord. With perfectly amazing skill and swiftness he tied up the half-unconscious man and, carrying him under his arm, crossed to the distant wall Here he lifted a picture and touched a spring which formed part of the design of the old wall-paper behind. Another panel opened slowly and a small apartment was disclosed. Alexis laid his burden gently down inside, closed the door and replaced the picture.

"We must leave here at once," Alexis continued gravely. Patinsky would murder any one for a tenth part of what you are carrying"

"Let's get away, then, before they find him," Haven suggested.

"It is arranged," Alexie replied ""When I saw the Col. Patinsky I feared that this might happen. To the bottom of the avenue Little Master, as quickly as you can Ivan sits in the car and the engine beats all the time. I must fetch Paul, for we, too, shall travel"

"Where to?" Haven asked.

"There is only the road to Warsaw," Alexis answered.

THE carefully attired hotel clerk, with his glossy hair and generally spick-and-span appearance—he had almost the air of a Riviera "gigolo"—gazed at the strange figure confronting him and gasped. He had presence of mind enough, however, to declare emphatically that there were no rooms available

The sight of the dispatch case obviously chained to Haven's wrist and a certain fineness of feature and physique helped him to ignore for a moment the mud-stained condition of his suggested guest. At Alexis he scarcely ventured to glance. There was surely no one in the world who would refuse to do the bidding of such a giant.

"The gentleman will follow me," he invited.

Then, for some minutes, Wilfred Haven walked once more the paths of luxury, breathed the warmed aire of the almost overheated hotel, trod on soft carpets, met without shrinking the curious glances of a whole crowd of civilized people. He stepped into a smoothly running lift and was led into a suite of rooms which reminded him very much of the Ritz. The hotel clerk, with one eye upon Alexis, lingered near the door.

"This suite," he announced, will cost the gentleman—"

He paused to figure it out.

"American or English money, if you please," Haven begged. "Not that it matters a damn."

"Fifty dollars a day."

"I take it," Haven decided "Send your valet to turn on the bath. Send soap, bath salts, a coiffeur"

Then he closed the door, and a few minutes later there was nothing to be seen in that huge bath but the head of Wilfred Haven, with an ecstatic smile upon his face, dabbing at himself with a sponge.

The hotel clerk, half an hour later, realized that he had taken a right decision. Six feet of splendid young manhood wrapped in a bathcloth dressing gown received him when he returned a little doubtfully to the suite. Wilfred Haven, with a clean body, was a man again. He spoke with a tone of authority.

"The valet is here at your service, sir," the hotel clerk announced, pointing to a scarlet-coated young man who was also hovering in the background.

"The costuma of monsieur is prepared," the latter confided, in stumbling French

Haven, whose face was already covered on one side with lather, turned his head

"What do you mean?" he demanded "I haven't any clothes."

The valet, who spoke no English, failed to understand. Haven was staring at the bed with a blank expression upon his face. The hotel clerk smiled.

"Your things arrived this afternoon, sir."

Haven sprang to his feet. He stood at the fot of the great wooden bedstead and gazed incredulously at the coveriet Upon it were neatly arranged a dianer suit, linen, black tie and underclothes He picked up a collar It was his own marked with his initials He lifted the dinner coat—also his own He glanced at Alexis, whose expression was very grave indeed. He looked at the hotel clerk, who was smiling and seemed to consider the whole affair a capital joke, and finally he clasped his hands to his head

"Those are my clothes!" he exclaimed. "No one knew I was coming here—I didn't know myself—I don't even now know the name of the hotel. They were tumbled into a van on a refugee train which I left at the frontier. How did they get here?"

The hotel clerk continued to smile. He also shrugged his shoulders.

"Monsieur has, perhaps, friends whom he has forgotten," he suggested "The luggage was delivered this afternoon. The porter compared the name upon the label with your entry in the hotel register and brought them here while you were in your bath."

Haven turned to Alexis

"It isn't only that," Haven pointed out when he was again in a position to speak. "Who recognized the bags and got them off that train? Who brought them to Warsaw? Who knew that I would be at this hotel?"

""Those are things one does not understand," Alexis confessed "And just now the things that one does not understand are dangerous. It is permitted by American master that I go below? I shall make inquiries among the couriers."

WILFRED HAVEN gazed around with interest at the little groups of men and women seated in the lounge of the hotel.

There were easy-chairs everywhere, but only one occupant of the place—a young woman in an attractive black evening dress—chic from her temperately manicured nails to her beautifully coiffured hair. She looked up at his entrance, and an exclamation broke from his lips.

He stared at her as though she had been a ghost. Her queer little smile broke into a laugh at his consternation, her eyes flashed a welcome, she stretched out her hand.

"I am flesh and blood," she assured him. "Coma and try."

He was scarcely conscious of his progress across the room. He held her fingers, soft and tense, in his. She laughed into his eyes.

"Others, too, can have adventures," she murmured. "Speak to me or I shall think some terrible Russians have made you dumb."

"I suppose I'm awake," Haven murmured, as the man left them. "I'm not going to wait long for one question," he said emphatically. "Will you tell me, young lady, how you—whom I left in that horrible train—just commencing its crawl across Europe—have arrived here in Warsaw, looking like—well," he went on with an appreciative glance at her, "as though you didn't know what being a refugee meant?"

She laughed under her breath. Everything about her seemed marvelous, even her white gleaming teeth.

"Well, I'll explain," she consented, taking a cigaret from a small jeweled case and lighting it.

"I found out that that particular train never could leave because of the difference in the gauge, and no one seemed to be doing anything about replacing it. No orders were being issued and fearful rumors were going about every moment. I decided to try ta get away, and, as I was passing down the platform, I saw a crowd around the luggage van, everyone, apparently, helping themselves to what they wanted. I noticed two of your bags there, with your name on, and, after about half an hour, I got a man to drag them into the yard for me They would certainly have been stolen if they had been left there, and I could not think of any place you could go to, except Warsaw. It is not such a miracle, after all, you see! I hired a motor car for some distance, and I took the train for the rest. I arrived here this morning. I went out and spent all my money shopping."

"Well, I was jolly thankful for the bags, at any rate," he assured her 'It was very sporting of you to have bothered about them."

"Now suppose you tell me your adventures," she suggested. "I see that you are still clasping your dispatch case."

He nodded and a passing shadow darkened his face

Something in her persistence filled him with a vague disquietude. He suddenly remembered how little he knew of her.

"I'm not sure yet," he replied evasively. "Do you realize" he added, "what complete strangers we are? Except that your name is Anna Kastellane and that you speak marvelous English, I know nothing whatever about you."

She smiled

"Is that not rather intriguing?"

"Not in the least," he assured her bluntly. "I like to know all about my friends and I hate mysteries"

"You are quite right," she conceded. "You certainly have the right to know everything about me you want to. There is not much to tell."

"First of all, I'll give you a choice," he suggested, as the barman approached them. "Another cocktail or dinner?"

"Dinner" she decided promptly

"Thank God," he echoed with fervor "How much in good American money, Fred?"

The man's eyes twinkled as he accepted a liberal tip

A man who had been noisily imbibing some curious form of aperitif of the country, detached himself from his acquaintances and leaned over toward tha barman. He was a lantern-jawed, melancholy looking person, with sunken cheeks and a general aspect of ill health, notwithstanding a powerful physique.

"Well, Fred?" he asked.

"Three hundred and seventy-one his number is," the barman confided reluctantly.

"Tha key was on the table by his side. He's an American, all right, too You don't need to worry about that"

The lean man tapped with his empty glass upon the counter and Fred shook him another cocktail. He sipped it slowly and looked around. Haven and his companion were just leaving the room

The fine restaurant of the Hotel de l'Europe at Warsaw was crowded with diners, but Haven's table was reserved in a pleasant and obscure corner.

"Now, how much are you going to tell me of your life's history, Miss Anna Kastellane?"

She sipped her vodka. Her eyes traveled across the room There was something in her face which puzzled him—something sad and yet enigmatic

"I am a Russian, although as you have noticed, I speak English, as I do French, as well as my own language. That is because I have lived abroad a great deal. I was educated in Russia, however, and went to college there.

"I returned to Russia during the war," she went on. "I thought that I might help I found it difficult. Russia, for a time, is beyond the help of man or God. * * * There were circumstances," she continued after a moment's pause, "which made it advisable for me to keep as far as possible from my own people and my own friends while I was in Russia. I took a room in that lodging house, imagining that it was in a safe part of the city

"I had already made up my mind to leave, before the last outbreak came. Nothing else matters about me particularly Now, tell me about yourself, Mr. Wilfred Haven Tell me how you are planning to get away from here"

Word by word he was weighing up the girl's scanty story. He was trying as hard as he could to believe it—and failing utterly. He knew quite well that, although he was finding her, as he had done from the first moment, terribly and dangerously attractive, there was mingled with his feeling for her a curious and ominous fear.

"Well, I haven't made any plans yet," he admitted. "I shall probably go down tomorrow and see if our people can help me Pretty well hemmed in here, aren't we? Where do you want to get to?"

"London, if I can manage it. I think I shall tack myself on to you and rely upon your chivalry. Perhaps we could go somewhere underground for the next few months I should not wonder if we had peace hy then."

She looked at him with a curious little smile flickering at the corners of her lips He was dismally conscious of a change in their relations

"I AM not happy here," she announced "Let us take our coffee in that pleasant bar. It is more intime."

She laid her hand upon his arm and its intense clasp conveyed to him something of the nervous emotion which had seized her. Her eyes besought him. He hesitated no longer, whispered a word to the waiter and led her toward the door In a far corner of the restaurant a man in the brilliant uniform of a Polish general, who had half risen to his feet, resumed his place.

In the bar they found two chairs in a retired corner. They ordered coffee and sipped, with dubious appreciation, some Polish liqueur.

"It sounds far-fetched, of course," she admitted "But you have not lived in Russia for three years without finding out that for generations the Russian aristocracy and wealthier classes have had no fancy for ordinary investments. The money for which they have made their peasants and miners toil to fill their pockets has gone into jewels"

"You sound almost revolutionary yourself," he remarked

"Perhaps I am," she acknowledged calmly "I did not appear to be much in favor with the people, though, did I, when we first met?"

She shivered as she spoke, and for a moment he shared her emotion

"Don't let's talk about that," he begged. "What is it you are suggesting in plain words?"

"Isn't it obvious?" she asked, a little patiently "Couldn't you guess why those officials were so anxious to get at the contents of your satchel? Some of "your chiefs were, without doubt, more gallant than you, and your satchel could easily contain a fortune in jewels. It is not my affair, however. I am sorry that I mentioned it. All that I would ask of you is that you complete your great kindness to me and let me accompany you through the next stages of your journey"

"If it is possible," he promised her, without, however, any show of enthusiasm "It may not be easy. Tomorrow I shall get a map I shall see hy which route it is best to travel - If I find it possible to take you with me I will do so, but on one condition"

"Condition?" she repeated, her eyebrows delicately raised

He nodded pleasantly but quite firmly.

"The condition is that you ask me no more questions about my mission. Whatever it may be, and whatever description of papers or documents or anything else I may have in my case, they are of a secret nature and I prefer not to talk about them"

She stiffled a yawn.

"I agree, of course," she assented indiffirently "If I have shown undue curiosity, it is your own fault No man should go about with a bag clamped on to his wrist"

They fell into silence, a gesture of resentment on her part, he felt, owing to his lack of confidence. He wanted very much to trust her, to believer in her entirely. Her curiosity about his mission might be a perfectly natural one.

His reflections were brought to an abrupt termination. Subconsciously his observation of her had not been wholly a matter of admiration He had been watching her in other ways, also, and he saw distinctly the sudden start, almost shiver, with which she recognized someone who had just detached himself from the throng of people gossiping and drinking coffee in the hall Her fingers closed tightly upon the handkerchief with which she had been toying She shrank back in her chair

"Who is this coming?" Haven demanded

"An acquaintance, whom I would have preferred not to meet here," she replied.

He weighed her words and believed them An elderly man in a gorgeous uniform, with a long row of ribbone across his chest, came to a standstill before them, clicked

his hsels together and bowed. Hs raissd her fingers to his lips.

"Wslcome back to our city, Anna Kastsllans," he said with empressement.

"I am very glad to be here," shs replied lightly. "Other places ars not so agreeable. You seem gay in Warsaw."

"Will you be so kind as to present your companion?"

Anna KastsHane obeyed, but there was little plassurs in ths manner of her doing so.

"Mr. Wilfred Haven, late of the American Embassy in Petrograd," shs murmered. "Gen. Grotzowill, of the Polish Army."

Havsn rose to his feet and accspted ths general's hand. He was a fine-looking man, inclined toward corpulence, but with a good presanca and flashing brown syes.

"I sent my aids-de-camp, Mr. Haven, to ssarch for you an hour ago," he announced. "I am in command of ths Second Division, whose cavalry is at present patrolling the frontier."

"I have ssen nothing of your aide-de-camp," Haven replied, without overmuch courtesy. "What might havs been his business with me?"

Ths Gsnsral's manner stiffened slightly. Hs drew himself up and he was sartainly a magnificent figure of a man, standing perfectly motionless and almost as tall as Haven himself.

"It may rather be my affair to inquire what is your business in our capital," hs rejoined coldly. "The reason I sent for you, and have now sought your acquaintance, is because I understand that a company of my cavalry was instrumental in rescuing you and your servants from a band of freebooters, as these Russian revolutionaries seem to have becoms, who dared to follow you across the frontier."

Haven thought for a minute of Patinsky whom he had left lying in ths secret room of the shooting lodge, with cords biting into his body, and momentarily he flinched.

"Your information is perfectly correct, Generai," he admitted. "To my great relief and gratitude your asvalry drove the Russians off and I took ths opportunity to continue my journey."

The General stroked his beard.

"I am greatly surprised," he confided, "that I havs not received a report of the affair from Col. Patinsky, who ts in charge of ths company.

"I will receive you at ths barracks tomorrow morning, Mr. Haven," he said, "and I will ascertain from ths staff authorities whether there is sny chance of assisting your sgress from the country. My own opinion is that you must maks up your mind to spend a short time with us. • • • You can offer me no news then of my troop, Mr. Haven?"

"I left thsm at Prince Ostrekoff's shooting box," the latter confided.

"I understand that the telephone and telegraph wires had been destroyed in every direction."

"Nevertheless," tha General reflected, "this complete silence—the shooting box is within two hours' march of a fortified town—I find somewhat puzzling. You will not forget to do me the honor than, Mr. Havan," he added significantly, as he drew back a step, "of paying me a call at ths barracks before you maks any attempt at continuing your journey."

Ths Genaral saluted. Haven, who, at the latter's request, had rasumed his seat, rose to his feet. Anna Kastellane bowed. The little ceremony was at an end. Haven watched the departing figure with a frown.

"Now what the mischief," he muttered, "is the meaning of all that?"

Shs motioned him back into his place.

"First of all, the General is anxious about Col. Patinsky and his troop of asvalry, from whom he has received no report. You know best whether there is any cause for that."

"You bet I do!" Haven murmured under his hrasth.

"Furthermore," she continued, "you are like all your race—and the British, too, for that matter—you have a task to perform and you think you sasn go straight through with it, stride across continents, direct to your goal, just because of your sacred diplomatic passport. Don't you understand, my dear friend, that the whole world is at war, or on the brink of war? Respect for altquet and diplomatic usage scarcely continues to exist."

For once there was nothing slow about Wilfred Haven. Hs swung round upon her and there was a flame of passionate inquiry in his eyes.

"Can I trust you?" he demanded.

He saw ths tenseness of her expression, noted her brief hesitation, and knew that she was between two minds. For him she chose the wrong one.

"My dear young man," she laughed, "these are not the days to trust any one."

AT 6 O'CLOCK on the following evening, Wilfred Haven's attention was suddenly arrested by the sight of two figures —a man and a woman—talking together in a corner of the Palm Court. The girl he recognized at once as Anna Kastellane. The man was the sadaverous-looking individual whom he had seen lounging in the bar on the previous evening. They were conversing with the confidence of intimates and Haven was conscious of a queer little sensation of uneasiness. Hs watched them, frowning. Such a sensation as jealousy seemed ridiculous, yet he realized in those few seconds that, notwithstanding his intense

Outside the closed doors of his suite, Haven found a very depressed Alexis standing guard.

preoccupation in his own enterprise, he was capable of a subconscious sentiment which as yet Presently, as though with reluche he had not paused to analyze, tance, she drew away. He saw her, hslf turned from him, motion the man to depart. She came across the hall very slowly and apparently deep in thought.

"At last!" she exclaimed. "I thought that you were lost."

The barman reappeared and very soon they were established in a corner with the atlas spread out between them.

"Will you look at that and tell me how I am to get anywhere?" he demanded bitterly.

"You are such a restless person with those love-letters of yours," she mocked him gently. "Why not settle down here? It is a very agreeable hotel, there is some life still in the place, and here am I willing to do my best to amuse you."

"Did you go up to the barracks this morning?" she asked.

"I did not," he answered. "And believe me, I had very good reasons for staying away."

He closed the atlas with a slam.

"You're a strange creature," he observed. "How do I know that you're not a spy?"

"If I am, I am not spying on you," she rejoined.

"Show me your passport," he demanded abruptly.

She looked at him speculatively.

"Are you mistrusting me?" she asked.

"I find you damnably distracting and I'm afraid of you your stories about yourself are not in the least convincing."

She leaned back in her chair and laughed. Her mirth appeared to be so genuine that tears actually came into her eyes. She wiped them away, called to the barman and ordered a cocktail.

"I'm a bit afraid of you," he added.

Again she laughed, though this time in more restrained fashion. She raised her glass and the corners of her lips quivered as she looked into his eyes.

"If you challenge me," she threatened, "I shall try to change that fear into some other feeling. It would be impossible? Yes?"

He was in a queer mood for he spoke to her almost savagely.

"You shall try," he declared. "As soon as this accursed bracelet is off my wrist and I am a free man —you shall try then, if you want to—if you dare!"

"Of course, I shall dare! See how bravely I am even now,' she went on, suddenly caressing his hand. "Of course, I shall dare, dear Wilfred. I have known Englishmen with many strange names," she added reflectively, "Englishmen and American, but 'Wilfred' is new to me. Are you beginning to trust me a little more, Wilfred? Am I still to bring you down my passport?"

"You are," he replied emphatically. "And don't forget it."

"I want to be sure that I can trust you, that's all. If I find that I can't, I'm going to crawl out of this country somehow by myself, even if I never see you again."

His tone was perhaps a little more brusque than he had intended. She shrank away for a moment as though he had struck her, then she rose to her feet.

"I will see you down here before dinner," she suggested. "I think I can prove to you then that I have been thinking of you and your safety all day. I have a plan and if, after I have told you what it is, you still wish to mistrust me, you can do so, but in that case we shall say good night and good-by."

She turned hastily toward the door and swept out of the room, having always the air of keeping her face concealed from him as though she wished to hide the tears in her eyes.

OUTSIDE the closed doors of his suite, Haven found a very depressed Alexis standing on guard.

"There is bad news, master," he announced, as he unlocked the doors, and following Haven into the room, turned on the taps of the bath. "The police have been here this afternoon. They sent for me. They sent also for Paul and Ivan. They discovered from our passports that we had borne arms for the Tsar and were only released for special service in the household of His Highness."

"Well, what was their trouble?" Haven asked, as he began to undress.

Alexis shook his head sadly.

"They said that the Little Master had no longer need of protection under present conditions, that we had fulfilled our mission, and that if he had enemies it was a matter for the police. Foreign soldiers, or foreigners who have borne arms for their country, are being cleared out of Warsaw. The Police Commissary was a humane man but he told us—all three—that he must make his report to the military and that, without a doubt, we should be forced to return to Russia."

"I get an uneasy feeling about this hotel, Alexis. I feel as though I were being watched all the time."

"His Highness used to say that this city was always the headquarters of international spies," Alexis confided. "So long as Paul Ivan and I are here, the Little Master is safe from criminals and thieves. If they send us away, the Little Master must leave the country—it does not matter how—but he must leave it."

The Sinister Report

"Is there anyone special whom you distrust, Alexis?" Haven inquired, as he tied his tie.

The man's honest face clouded over. He was obviously distressed.

"The Little Master has confidence in the young lady who left the train and brought his clothes here?" he asked simply. "Will the Little Master describe the house in which he found her?" Alexis begged.

"It was a tall, narrow building just across the boulevard, almost opposite the porter's lodge of the Palace. It was queerly built, inasmuch as there seemed to be no ground floor. The first front window was about twelve feet up. I remember that because there was a drunken brute who dragged her to it to show her off to a mob who were passing."

Alexis' eyes grew strangely expressionless. His lips scarcely moved as he spoke.

"I know that house, Master," he said.

"What about it?"

"It is a notorious house—a house of ill fame."

Haven swung around from the window. He felt a horrible sinking of the heart, and, without noticing what he was doing, he crushed up the cigaret between his fingers.

"Alexis!" he exclaimed. "Are you sure? Think—don't make a mistake. Are you sure?"

"I am sure," the man repeated gravely. "His Highness has had the place closed twice. It was only during the disturbances that the tenants came back to it."

He sprang up, brushed his hair once more, straightened his tie and stretched out his arms for the coat which Alexis was still holding.

"I dine in the restaurant," he announced. "If you hear any more from the police, send me word."

Alexis bowed. With his fingers upon the door handle he leaned forward. There was something paternal in his attitude.

"I regret that the Little Master was disturbed by my news," he said. "Russian women of the north are not to be trusted. They are very cold, they are very beautiful and they are very false. They make wonderful spies, but they are not to be trusted."

The lump was in Haven's throat again for a moment as he passed out.

HAVEN was first in the bar, and when Anna Kastellane arrived he was seated on a stool, drinking his second cocktail.

"I do not think that I wish for a cocktail tonight," she decided. "We will have some champagne for dinner instead. They have cashed a check for me which I left at my bank—I found the money just now in my room. I am rich. I shall be hostess."

He walked by her side in gloomy silence. The head waiter welcomed them with smiles and gave them the same desirable table. It was not long before she perceived that something was the matter.

"Tell me what has happened," she begged. "You must tell me, please."

He was searching wearily for some evasive reply when a sudden brutal impulse seized him—the primitive man's instinct for destroying beauty that offends him. He told her the truth.

"I have just heard," he said, "that the house from which I rescued you was—a bad house. You know, one of the red-lamp houses where women are bought and sold."

A Fawn at Bay

She looked at him for a moment without moving a muscle, her deep blue eyes, fixed upon his, absolutely without expression. Suddenly she gave a shiver which seemed like the rustling of startled leaves before a thunderstorm. Every particle of color was drained from her cheeks, her lips were parted, a slowly dawning horror crept into her eyes. She seemed incapable of speech and he could think of no words. She had asked for the truth and he had told it.

The change in her, when at last it came, was unexpected. The blood flowed back into her cheeks. They became delicately scarlet. The hard stare of horror had gone from her eyes and they were growing so soft that he feared to look into them. Her lips, too, were quivering. He knew that she was going to speak and he felt that he would have given anything to have fled like a coward from his place. She spoke however, quite quietly.

"I am sorry to be stupid," she said. "That little speech of yours—your very lucid explanation—was rather a shock to me. I promised that during dinnertime tonight I would offer you a suggestion," she reminded him.

"I have not forgotten it," he answered eagerly, only too anxious to escape into some normal and less tragic atmosphere. "Let's have it."

She watched the carving of the salmon, and waited until the dish was served with its attendant sauces, and the maitre d'hotel disappeared.

"You have wasted all your time brooding over frontiers and railway trains," she remarked. "Is there no other way of travelling?"

Her idea flashed in upon him at once.

"By air?"

"I know the manager of the large airdrome here and I went to see him this morning. There are three machines in the hangars, rejected by the Government because they are unarmored and not heavy enough for serious bombing."

"Before I say a word," he insisted, "let us have this much of an understanding. If I make use of your idea and try to get away by plane, you will accompany me?"

"I was hoping to do so," she admitted coldly. "Eventually I could pay my share. Have you any money?"

"A little. All I could get hold of today. They might let me have some more tomorrow."

"How much, exactly?"

He made a mental calculation.

"The equivalent of about £200 in English money when I have paid the bill."

She reflected for a few moments.

"With what I have, we might start on that," she decided.

She lowered her tone. Her face continued to wear its strange mask of impassivity. Her words seemed draped with icicles. The eyes which had laughed companionably into his a few hours ago were like polished ovals of steel.

"The maitre d'hotel pays us too much attention," she confided. "There are people in the room whom I mistrust. For a time we speak of other things—or not at all."

She lit a cigaret and leaned back in her chair, while the waiter served a duck at the table.

"From whom did you discover the nature of my profession?" she asked him calmly.

He looked at her with beseeching eyes, but he realized that she was cased in steel. He checked back all the things he longed to say.

"My information referred only to the character of the lodging house from which I rescued you," he replied. "My informant was Alexis of Prince Ostrekoff's bodyguard. He and his brothers were quartered at the porter's lodge opposite."

She inclined her head.

"He was perfectly correct in his statement," she admitted. "The house was notoriously one of ill fame. That was why I was surprised that the young women upstairs made such a fuss. They always received the most impossible people."

"What about that passport?" he asked, feeling that if he did not loose his grip on the stem of the wine-glass it would break.

She opened her bag and handed it across the table. He studied it

for a few minutes inattentively. The bearer, he learned, was known a Anna Kastellane She was 22 years old, her hair was dark, her eyes were blue, her figure was slim her profession was undeclared and he, birthplace had been at Petrograd He folded the document up and returned it to her across the table It was partly sheer deviltment and partly genuine suspicion which prompted his next question

"What about the other passport?"

He failed to shake her Immobility

"What other passport?"

"The one you had in your bag when the man came around in the railway carriage"

"So you were looking over my shoulder," she observed, in a tone which sounded as though it would have been scornful, if the matter had been worthier of her attention.

She showed signs of wishing to leave and he called for the bill Then she spoke

"My other passport," she confided, "is for use in case of emergency You evidently have not studied the art of espionage To be a real success, a woman needs to be able to change her peasport as often as her lover We will take coffee together in the lounge and settle this matter of the airplane You are probably in greater danger here than you realize I am not too well placed myself I go to my room for a few minutes Will you wait for me where we took our coffee last night?"

They left the room together but parted at the lift outside and Haven made his way toward the Bar

He crossed the hall and seated himself at the table which Anna Kastellane had indicated The minutes passed but there was no sign of her Instead, there advanced a melancholy cavalcade down the broad staircase—Alexis, upright and imposing as usual, walking with dignified and leisurely strides, but after him a sergeant and two soldiers, the latter with drawn bayonets Alexis quickened his pace as he saw his master and bowed low before his chair. At a word from the sergeant, the soldiers dropped their bayonets They stood, nevertheless, at attention

"American Master," Alexis announced, "the end for us has come We have kept our word faithfully to His Highness so far as the fates would have it An order has arrived from the general commanding the garrison. We are to return to Russian soil tonight One may be willing to fight," Alexis added, with a mighty sigh. "We cannot fight the army of Poland"

Goading the Laggard

They marched away, a strange procession, Alexis magnificently indifferent to his escort, and Haven felt his heart sink, was conscious indeed of a strange sense of loneliness as they left him Anna Kastellane sank into the chair by his side with a hard little laugh

'The tale bearer!" she scoffed "Has he discovered more stories to recount of my horrible life? He seems to have found some trouble on his own account"

"It is trouble splendidly earned," was the cold retort 'Can we discuss further this scheme of yours'"

"We must discuss it now or never In this world," she answered "In my capacity as spy, I have been telephoning to various 'associates. You are in a very bad way indeed, I can assure you of that You have private enemies who are watching your every movement and you have official ones who are only waiting to declare themselves until they can do so with some show of authority."

"I don't see why I should suddenly become so unpopular," Haven observed, lighting a cigaret "What laws have I broken? What country have I offended? I am, after all, an American official doing my duty."

She struck him across the mouth with her fan—lightly, and as though in fun, but with deliberate intent.

"I am tired of your obvious lying," she complained. "I will be as blunt with you as you have been with me You have broken the laws of Russia, if such a country can be said to have any laws, by bringing out of it two or three million pounds' worth of jewels which had been already confiscated by the state."

"And you?"

"Oh, you have been clever enough to find out all about me," she mocked. "I am a spy and a prostitute and a most unpleasant person to be connected with. I left Russia with one false passport and entered Poland with another. I am going to have supper with General Grotzowill tonight If I do not succeed in making him my slave—with all my experience it ought to be easy—I shall probably be standing with my back to a brick wall tomorrow morning, instead of stepping into that airplane with you. The authorities here are most disagreeable about me They do not seem to understand my profession at all."

Abandonment

For a definite interval of time brief though it was, Wilfred Haven was illogically and ridiculously conscious of one sensation and one sensation only. He had forgotten the dangers of which she had spoken in plain words. He remembered only that single statement of her intentions She was going to supper with the Polish general who had looked at her so strangely, yet with so much obvious admiration, on the preceding evening He struck the table with his fist, his fist which seemed swollen with upstanding veins, and he scowled into her face.

"We are going to set to work to find that airplane right away," he insisted "You are not going to supper with that damned Pole"

"Who on earth will stop me?" she demanded "I may be doing this to save my life, but I rather expect to be amused. He is elderly, perhaps, but he is an aristocrat, and his manners are excellent It is a pity," she went on, "to have to sup so soon after our excellent dinner, but the general is impatient. I have just spoken to him upon the telephone He may be called back to duty at any moment."

Haven's eyes were ablaze

"You shall not go," he declared

Her eyebrows were slowly uplifted She looked at him as though he had taken leave of his senses.

"The strain of these days has been too much for you" she murmured. "You have to win your way to safety as men should—with your right arm, your sword and your revolver. A woman has to use other methods Fortunately, my experience at the tall house opposite the porter's lodge, where Prince Ostrekoff's bodyguard lodged—"

He rose suddenly to his feet. For a moment, as he towered forbiddingly over her, she suffered a spasm of genuine physical fear.

"You can go to hell by yourself" he declared "I'll find my own way out of this blasted country."

HAVEN was waiting for the lift when he felt a touch upon the shoulder. He turned around and was confronted by his friend, the young hotel clerk.

"If you could spare a moment," Mr Haven," the latter begged, "the manager of the hotel, Mr. Nakoli, would like to see you"

Haven was out of temper, angry with the whole world and sick at heart. He answered almost roughly.

"If the manager wants to see me, I shall be in my apartment"

The young man made a sign to the lift attendant, who removed his thumb from the button which he was about to press. The lift remained stationary.

"It would be better for you to come to the manager's office, sir," he begged. "There is another gentleman there from the police. It is a matter of some importance"

Haven turned away from the lift.

"Take me there then," he assented shortly

The clerk led the way across the lounge and down a long passage to the back of the general offices, at the end of which he paused and knocked at a door In response to an invitation to enter, he stood on one side and Haven, passing in, found himself faced by a typical, black-bearded, middle-aged Pole seated at a desk with the sallow complexion of a man who has smoked too much all his life

In an easy-chair by his side was a man in plain black uniform, a man with a brown beard, hooked nose and light blue eyes of deceptive mildness. The hotel manager rose and bowed to Haven

"I have the honor to present, to you, Mr Haven, Col Madriwill, chief of the police of Warsaw and connected also during the war with the Intelligence Department."

Haven bowed and accepted a chair. He sat there, gloomily silent, the satchel still under his arm

Col. Madriwill spoke smoothly "A formal complaint has been received by us from an organization which seems to call itself a Commission for Public Safety, and the document is signed by several men who I suppose consider themselves officials of the new Russian Republic. A definite complaint is made that you, Mr. Haven, have left the country with stolen property amounting to a very large sum There is a further demand that you be handed over to a military escort who are on their way here."

"You know perfectly well that if you hand me over you will be guilty of murder," Haven observed

Col Madriwill smiled politely.

"We do not wish to seem discourteous to the representative of a friendly nation, but we should be glad if you would spare us the embarrassment of your presence here'

"That is to say," Nakoll put in, "the Government would be glad if you would withdraw from the country before the arrival of the escort."

Haven leaned forward in his chair Again he felt the anger hot in his veins.

"Perhaps you will advise me how to get out of your city and where to go"

The chief of police stroked his beard

"You appear to have come here, Mr. Haven, at your own will," he reminded him, "so you can scarcely expect us to take over the responsibility of your future movements"

"But what frontier is open?" Haven demanded

Madriwill looked at him with a slow smile

"The frontier back into Russia, which you are supposed to have crossed," he added, looking hard at the satchel, "with stolen property of great value"

Haven rose to his feet

"So that's the game, is it?" he remarked bitterly. "You first of all order my bodyguard away, you are going to let those bloody Reds send in what they call an escort to deal with me, and you are turning me out of the hotel so that you will have no responsibility with regard to me,"

Madriwill fixed him with his pale blue eyes.

"If you cared to deposit anything you might have with you of value, and the possession of which might be disputable, in the care of, say, one of our principal banks—the National Bank of Warsaw, for instance—and present yourself to us without luggage or any other encumbrances the situation might be reconsidered"

Haven turned toward the door.

"What a lot of time you've wasted," he scoffed. "I'll leave the hotel tonight"

THRICE rejected by other hotels which, apparently under police orders, pretended to have no accommodations Haven ordered his taxi driver to drive to a cafe

As he descended, the man muttered something in guttural Polish Haven summoned the commissionaire.

"Do you speak French, English or Russian?" he asked.

The man twirled a fine mustache.

"Every language, American gentleman," he replied condescendingly.

"Tell me what this fellow is trying to say to me then."

A few words passed between the commissionaire and the chauffeur, after which the former turned to Haven.

"He says he cannot understand why you have difficulty in obtaining a room at the hotels, but if you cannot find shelter for the night he knows a house where you can have a bed and no questions asked. The price will not be very high"

"At a hotel?" Haven inquired.

The commissionaire smiled as one man of the world to another

"A private hotel," he confided "All suites, supper rooms, ladies if desired."

"Tell him to wait for me, then," Haven begged, slipping a tip into the man's hand. "I shan't stay here very long."

The cafe turned out he the best in the city. There were many tables, most of them occupied, and a gayly dressed little orchestra making fantastic music. He spread out his map. Suddenly Fred was standing before him, his coat-collar buttoned high to his throat and a black felt hat pulled down over his eyes.

"Say, Mr Haven," he began in a muffled and almost angry tone, "If you don't know better than to sit about in a public cafe with a map on the table in front of you, it's time you and I swapped jobs.

"Don't you know that this place is full of spies?" he remonstrated. "I can tell you I'm doing myself no good by stopping to speak to you, even for this moment. The little man three tables away is an agent of the police He scooted out like a rabbit as soon as he saw you produce the map and noticed the satchel. I'll bet you what you like he's in that telephone box, speaking to the police headquarters Can't you take the damn thing off your wrist, Mr. Haven?

"Don't you stay around If you're likely to get into trouble, Fred All I want is to get out of the country and it doesn't seem to me there's any one who can help me do that"

"There's only one person who could," Fred replied, dropping his voice a little, "but then I rather fancy she's after you herself—she and another little gang of them." She's supping in the restaurant at the present moment with the general commanding the garrison here She can do what she likes until his loses his job

He swaggered off threading his way amongst the tables and exchanging greetings with many acquaintances

Haven whispered to the commissionaire The commissionaire translated to the taxicab driver. The latter shook his head in knowing fashion, waited until his passenger was safely ensconced inside and drove off. To Haven the journey seemed interminable, although, as a matter of fact, it took something less than 20 minutes At the end of that time his driver turned off the main boulevard and continued for a short distance down a narrow street, pulling up eventually at a large and solid-looking house with a courtyard in front The place appeared to be in darkness, but the sound of music stole out from behind the drawn curtains, from the narrow fanlight above the door came the sharp line of purple light

Haven paid his taxicab driver. A porter picked up his bags and led the way to the house The door was opened almost immediately by a manservant in livery The porter whispered something to him, laid the bags upon the carpeted floor and took almost precipitate leave The servant, motioning Haven to follow, entered a heavily furnished, gloomy apartment on the ground floor. The room was overheated and a samovar was hissing on a side table

"Madam will see the gentleman," the servant announced in unexpected English

Haven was left to himself for barely five minutes. Then the door opened and a woman made noiseless entrance. Haven rose to his feet and stared at her in surprise which he found hard to conceal. She was tall, slim and pale, with thoughtful eyes and hair brushed back from her forehead in the Italian fashion. She wore a plain black dress which fitted her admirably and was cut in the severest style. She wore no jewelry and made use of no cosmetics. She greeted Haven gravely but pleasantly in English which was almost without accent

"What can I do for you, Mr. Haven?" she asked

"Tell me how you knew my name first," he begged,

She smiled

"You know they call this city the whispering city," she confided. "You want a room, I think, for the night? A companion perhaps?"

"Certainly not," Haven replied "The police have been interfering in my affairs and they have made it difficult for me to stay at a hotel. If you don't mind taking me in until the morning, I shall be very grateful"

"You do not care to amuse yourself?" Madam persisted. "I have young lady guests of every nation and very good music They are dancing now." There was no doubt in Haven's mind now that he was in a brothel.

"Madam," Haven explained, "I am traveling on a serious errand and I am not looking for distraction. As soon after daylight as your man can get me a taxicab," Haven promised, producing his pocketbook, "I shall be ready to depart Here is 10 pounds"

The woman accepted the note with a little word of thanks

"I shall put you upon the ground floor," she announced. 'You will hear no noise and—it might be better."

"In what way?" he asked curiously

Madam smiled but made no reply She led Haven along the passage into a wider hall and pushed open the door He found himself in a clean and well-furnished bedroom, with a bathroom opening from it. His two bags were upon a luggage stand and the coverlet of the bed was turned back

"I trust that you will sleep well, Mr. Haven," she said "If you change your mind, you will find us on the floor above. There is a dancing room there, a bar and a cardroom."

She took very deliberate and courteous leave of her guest and Haven, drawing up a chair in front of the round table in the center of the room, unrolled his map and recommenced his study of it.

The night wore on. Haven felt himself growing sleepy, yet he resisted every inclination to undress and crawl into bed He sat waiting—for what he had not the faintest idea

An automobile drew up outside. The door of his room was swiftly opened and as swiftly closed. Anna Kastellane stood there, breathing quickly, her fingers still clenching the knob of the door behind her. Her eyes seemed to sweep around the room in one comprehensive flash She nodded and regained her breath.

"Thank heaven," she exclaimed, "you haven't been quite such a fool as you tried to appear! I was afraid I should find you tucked up in bed"

He rose to his feet. The automatic to which his hand had leaped was still gripped in his fingers, but with the muzzle pointing to the floor.

"What are you doing here?" he demanded.

"Don't waste time," she advised. "It's now or never for both of us. You can keep your pistol in your hand, if you want to You may have to use it. Take the smaller of your two bags. You can hold that in your left hand with the satchel. You'll have to leave the other behind. Come here"

He obeyed like a child at school. He stood by her side whilst she opened the door softly and peered up and down the passage. Then she drew back into the room, closing it again.

"To the right," she whispered, "as far as you can go, then turn to the left. The front door is open Outside the gate—the gate, too, is open—a car is waiting. Get into it, clap your hands and sit still. The man will know where to take you. When you get there—wait Everything else will happen—or it won't. Shoot any one who interferes with you. You understand?"

"Perfectly," he answered.

He passed out of the front door and hurried down the paved way, through the gate and across the pavement. The door of a big American touring car standing there was also open He sprang into it and clapped his hands.

AFTER about half an hour's rapid motoring they passed through two great gates, admitted by a sentry who presented arms at the sight of the card which the chauffeur extended toward him. On their left was a huge aledrome. They turned away from this to the open flying ground. Just outside one of the hangars a large plane was drawn up. A man approached the steps, patted them with his hand and, stretching up, unfastened the door above. Haven, completely resigned, did as indicated He climbed into the body of the plane and took his place in one of the four easy chairs. The man motioned him to remain where he was and retreated. The engine continued to roar.

Through the blurred glass he fancied that he saw twin lights advancing over the flying ground. An automobile! He rushed to the doorway It was an automobile crossing the great open space, swaying with the pace at which it was being driven. It was stopping. It turned half round with a tremendous skid. There were figures closing in upon the plane now. Out of the darkness someone came running up the steps. It was Anna Kastellane, dressed in a long Russian tunic over her evening frock and an astrekhan cap. With her was the lantern-jawed man of the Hotel de l'Europe.

They were off, speeding down the tracks, bumping along the ground. Suddenly there was a sense of lightness. Anna leaned back in her chair laughing hysterically.

"Miracles!" she cried, "We are away!"

Awakening on the following morning was one of the most curious experiences of Haven's life

"Are you awake?" Haven asked softly, leaning across the narrow space.

There was no reply Anna Kastellane, wrapped in her fur coat, was curled up and sleeping soundly.

Haven washed, dressed and resumed his seat and with his head buried in his hands tried to establish some coherence in his thoughts with regard to the events of the last few hours If only Anna Kastellane would wake up.

He looked at his watch. It was past seven o'clock. He turned around, attracted by a slight sound, Anna was sitting up in her place, stretching her arms. Her fur coat had fallen back and the long tunic with astrakhan up to her throat seemed to be stifling her. She unfastened it with lazy fingers and glanced at him, expressionless

"Well," she observed, "this is better than prison, is it not?"

"A great deal," he admitted. "Yet there are things which worry me. I should like, if I may, to have a few words with you."

"Oh, la la!" she mocked impatiently. "What a strange person! You are always seeking for explanations. Why can you not be happy that you are alive, when there are so many people who would like to cut your throat? I am going to bathe my eyes and wash. After-

ward we will say to one another as much as is necessary."

She waved away his assistance and made her unsteady way into the dressing room. When she returned, some time later, looking marvelously fresh and bringing with her a suggestion of aromatic and fragrant toilet water, the couches had been cleared away and he was engrossed in studying his map. She took the place opposite to him.

"You will allow me to ask you this at least—where do you think we are going?" asked the American.

"To Holland," she replied. "Captain Esterhazcy, who is on board, and who is the owner of the plane—it is going to cost us a great deal of money, by the by—says that we can very likely make it without a stop, unless the winds are too strong."

He leaned a little toward her.

"If we are flying toward Holland," he said, "we should be flying due west. We are, on the contrary, and we have been, since early morning, flying due east."

A brief silence followed his words. The fear that he had seen there once before was creeping back into her eyes and her lips were quivering.

"How do you know which way we are going?" she gasped.

"By the simplest of all means," he answered. "We are heading straight toward the rising sun."

"It is not possible," she murmured.

"Look out of the window for yourself," he suggested. "See from which direction the sunshine is falling."

A sleepy-eyed attendant appeared carrying a tray with coffee and rolls, which he set down between them.

"Where is Captain Esterhazcy?" Anna demanded.

"He sleeps," the man replied.

"Wake him at once," she insisted.

The man looked doubtful.

"The captain was in the cockpit till 4. He left word that he was not to be disturbed until 9 o'clock."

"Never mind that. It is very nearly 9 o'clock now. Tell him that I must speak to him. Our course is wrongly set."

The man withdrew. Haven kept his forefinger upon the map.

"Assuming that we have been traveling in this direction all night," he remarked, "and have been making, say, seventy miles an hour, we should be over Bessarabia now. If the idea really is to land us in Russia, I am afraid it looks like trouble."

"You have your gun?" she asked eagerly.

He nodded. His hand stole round to his hip pocket. Suddenly the complacency left his expression. She read the truth at once.

"You have not got it!" she cried. "Where is it?"

"It was in my hip pocket when I went to sleep last night," he groaned. "The button has been cut away. The pistol is gone. You are quite right, Anna Kastellane, I am too big a fool for a life of adventure."

Esterhazcy was advancing slowly from the back of the saloon. He was indeed a sinister figure as he stepped out of the gloom into the sunshine which was flickering through the windows. He made no secret of the gun which he carried in his right hand. With his left he steadied himself against the chair backs.

"You sent for me, Anna Kastellane," he said.

She swung round in her place.

"I did. You were told by General Grotzowill last night in my presence to take us in this plane to Holland. Will you tell me why we are traveling in the opposite direction?"

"You are very observant," he remarked. "However, as you want to know why, I must tell you that it was as a result of later orders."

"From whom?"

"From the general."

"I do not believe it," she exclaimed. "You are lying to me."

The man bowed and remained silent. It was a very eloquent silence.

"My orders were," he continued, speaking very impressively, "that, if you did not arrive until 7 o'clock this morning, you were to be taken westward and landed in Holland. If you arrived at the airdrome at any time before that—the precise hour of your arrival, I think was half past 2—you were to be taken eastward."

The color flamed up in her cheeks. Haven looked steadily out of the window as though he had not heard. A sad little throb of gratitude for his refusal to understand trembled in her heart.

"So this is to be my reward for not keeping my rendezvous with the general," she murmured. "I am to be thrown to the lions, and this poor young man, who is nothing to me and who should surely not be made responsible for my misdemeanors, is also to suffer for them."

The man who had been sitting in the observer's seat sprawled into the room.

"My friend, Colonel Patinsky. An expert flier as well as a cavalry officer. Permit me, Anna Kastellane, to present the colonel to you. Mr. Haven, I think, you know," said Esterhazcy.

THE silence that followed was one of those intervals in the development of a drama so unexpected that words are absolutely inadequate. The brain is engaged in an almost hopeless struggle to adapt itself to impossible demands. It was Anna Kastellane who broke it at last. She spoke in quite an ordinary tone of voice, without looking at any one in particular.

"So this is the revenge of a great Polish gentleman and soldier," she meditated.

Haven's heart jumped at her words. Although they had no material effect upon the situation, he felt a curious lightening of his intense depression.

"General Grotzowill had doubtless sufficient provocation," Patinsky observed, releasing his right hand from one of the huge gloves he had been wearing and stroking his mustache.

Anna turned to Esterhazcy.

"And you?"

He shrugged his shoulders. He was leaning against the chair on the other side of the aisle, but his fingers caressed always the butt of his revolver and his eyes seldom wandered far from Haven. Rumors had reached him of the young American's courage.

"As for me, mademoiselle," he replied, "you can have little of which to complain. I am a builder of motorcars and airplanes, who has lately been given a commission by the generosity of our great general. I obey his orders blindly."

"You have shown no interest, Anna Kastellane, as to our intentions with regard to your companion," purred Esterhazcy.

She turned away from the window and Haven, too, looked up.

"I am a woman," she remarked. "I am more interested in myself. Yet tell me what it is that you propose to do with him."

"It is my friend here who decides that," Esterhazcy replied, indicating his neighbor, his unpleasant smile once more in evidence. "It appears that there is already a small matter to be arranged between the two. Mr. Haven is in possession of some property belonging to the colonel."

"That's a lie," Haven declared.

"Later on," Patinsky threatened, "I hope to give this uncouth young man a lesson in manners. Before then, however, I shall require him to hand over to me the property he is carrying in that satchel."

Haven laughed, and curiously enough his laugh sounded almost natural.

"You've had one or two tries at that before," he reminded his adversary.

Esterhazcy rose to his feet.

"I shouldn't trust that sullen young man," he advised. "Even with the ridiculous bag strapped to his left wrist and without a gun he has unpleasant habits."

Esterhazcy walked warily past Haven, his automatic very much in evidence. Soon they heard him mounting the rungs of the iron ladder. Patinsky lit a cigaret and leaned back in his chair.

"I imagine the idea is," he whispered to Anna, leaning forward, "that we are not going to be left alone again until we have arrived at our destination, wherever that is."

"It would be more polite," Patinsky broke in, "if you raised your voice."

Haven waved his hand in ironical salute.

"We are not prisoners yet, Colonel," he reminded him. "Tell me," he went on, lowering his voice, "are you really in danger if they set you down in Russia?"

"If they set me down at any place from which they can communicate with Moscow or Petrograd it is certain death."

"Nothing to do with me?" he asked anxiously.

"Nothing whatever to do with you."

"I am going to ask you a question," she said, "which I have not asked you before and which, under ordinary circumstances I should not have dreamed of asking. Where do you keep the key of that chain and lock?"

Haven looked across at Patinsky. The latter was yawning ill-humoredly, but there was no sign of intelligence or interest in his face.

"I keep it hidden in my hair," Haven whispered. "That is why I never go to a barber's."

She drew a little away.

"There is no key," he said seriously.

"No key?" she repeated wonderingly.

"None at all," he assured her. "There is a secret catch, though, which was patented by a New York ex-criminal and which no one yet has ever been able to deal with. You see, you have to handle two different parts of the chain at the same time to make it work."

"It sounds ingenious," she murmured.

"It makes all the difference, of course," he pointed out. "If I had a key, I should be at my wits' end, hiding it all the time. Last night, for instance, my clothes were gone through when they took my revolver."

Haven shrugged his shoulders and turned back to Anna.

"Anna Kastellane," he lowered his voice, but low as it was it had a new note in it which thrilled her. "You and I have had our misunderstandings. I am not sure even now whether I love you or hate you the more, but it is certain that at this moment our fates are linked together. You say that to be left here in Russia would be death for you, and to be left in these men's hands—"

"Neither of these two things shall ever happen," she told him.

Haven nodded sympathetically.

"Watch all the time," Haven begged her. "I'm going to look out for my opportunity and take it. If I fail, you can always disown me, but what I want you to do is to be always on the watch. I may go for the man I decide to go for any time. Keep out of it if you can, but remember only this—if the man I'm struggling with drops his gun, pick it up and shoot him like a dog if you get a chance. Shoot the other, too. If he comes along. Don't be afraid of hitting me. I'm lucky. Blaze away—keep the muzzle low."

He ached in every nerve, but he held himself back. Patinsky was tense and watching. It was not the moment.

ABOUT twelve o'clock that morning some dried fish and a dish of stew was served to Anna Kastellane and Haven at one table and the pilot and Patinsky at the other.

"Do you know anything about Odessa?" he asked his companion.

"Not a thing," she answered, "except that I hope we are not going there."

"Why not?"

"Simply because it is a port," she explained, "from which all manner of little tramp steamships cross to Asia Minor and trade around the Black Sea."

A bell at the farther end of the saloon rang. Patinsky's companion drained his tumblerful of wine, swallowed a liquor glassful of vodka afterward, and stood up.

The bell rang again and their passage became more bumpy. Buttoning his coat as he went, the pilot disappeared.

"Observations, I expect," Patinsky remarked. "A very careful pilot Esterhazcy."

Esterhazcy almost stumbled into the saloon. There were icicles upon his coat and hanging from his cap. His face, when he lifted his vizor was white, with mottled patches of purple. He drank two glasses of vodka and then sank into the chair which the pilot had vacated.

"We are running into a storm," he muttered to Patinsky, as he poured out a third glass of vodka. "My heart almost stopped beating. I have reduced the speed and told Leon to glance off the wind. We may toss about a little, but we shall be safer. I hope our wings are all right. This snow is going to weigh like hell."

Suddenly the alarm bell rang. Patinsky rapidly arrayed himself in Esterhazcy's discarded cap and coat. He adjusted his goggles and pulled down the flap of the cap.

"Hope I will be able to stand it," he muttered as he hurried off.

They heard his footsteps climbing the rungs of the ladder. For a moment Anna Kastellane and Haven looked into one another's eyes. There was doubt in hers; there was purpose in his. Chivalry was a great quality, but her life and his—not to speak of his trust—came first.

Haven rose slowly to his feet. As though by a miracle his left arm was suddenly free of the encircling bracelet. He looked at Anna and she nodded. Her fingers closed on the satchel. Haven towered for a moment over the figure of the recumbent man, then his left arm swung around his neck and his right hand was in his pocket. If Haven at times during the last few days had seemed slow-witted, at that instant he was amazingly quick of action. His own automatic — Esterhazcy had evidently discarded his in favor of the newer weapon—was in his hand in a moment. He held it out to Anna.

"Take this," he muttered.

She obeyed without hesitation. Esterhazcy was struggling wildly to rise to his feet, but he had not the strength of a child.

"They robbed me of this," he continued, handling his beautifully polished automatic, "when I was asleep. It's only fit for fat. I think our friends in front will have enough to do for a time," he added, as the plane gave another violent lurch. "One thing we have to make certain of, though, and that is our friend the attendant."

He pushed a bell. His right hand slipped under the table. Presently the attendant, Olav, lumbered into the saloon, pulling on his coat as he came.

"Hands up—and quickly!" ordered Haven.

With a swift movement his automatic stole from under the table. The attendant raised his arms. Haven looked steadfastly into his face, looked at the narrow eyes which had almost disappeared into bulging creases of flesh, and became very cautious indeed.

"I am afraid," he said to Anna Kastellane, "that I must ask for your assistance. I want you to feel in his coat pockets and his breast pockets. I shall shoot him through the heart if he makes a move."

She passed her hands lightly over the man's huge body. They stole around toward his hip pocket and he flinched. She tugged for a moment and threw an old-fashioned but fully charged revolver on to the table.

Haven scarcely allowed himself to glance at it. He still held his gun like a rock.

"Finish with him, please," he begged. "He has lied already. A man like this is dangerous to deal with."

"I have searched from his boots to his neck," she announced, finally. "He has nothing more."

The two men made their way—the attendant leading and Haven following—into the pantry and the various offices behind. A thoroughly careful search produced no results. In a tiny chamber beyond, however, where Esterhazcy had apparently spent the night, Haven found that for which he was in search—Esterhazcy's discarded revolver under his pillow. He transferred it to his own pocket.

Arrived back in the saloon, Haven found changed conditions.

Anna Kastellane had turned on the one electric lamp from the switch by her side and by its light Haven could see that Esterhazcy had so far recovered as to be able to sit up. He had been talking, too. Haven heard his last words—

"You shall be set free in whatever country of the world you wish."

"You couldn't include me, I suppose?" Haven asked as he entered.

"Nicolas Esterhazcy," he said, "why do you irritate me? Your life was in my hands a few minutes ago—your life is in my hands now. I dislike shooting sitting game, but for the sake of the young lady, for my own sake and the sake of other people, I know that it is my duty to shoot you in that chair. I shall have only Patinsky to deal with then and I have dealt with him before. Why should I let an enemy live when he makes the odds against me doubtful?"

Esterhazcy was not a brave man, but he understood the guilt of bravado.

"Well," he admitted, "it appears that I am at your mercy. It do not see what you have to gain by wholesale murder. You would have to shoot every one on the plane if you expected to get off. I do not think that even Anna Kastellane would applaud your action."

She lowered the revolver which she had been holding steadily.

Look at me, Nicolas Esterhazcy, said Anna. I have an uncertain forefinger. It is trembling and quivering even now. I have never shot a man and I should like to see one die. Tell me what you meant to do with us, or slip into hell."

If the girl's forefinger was tremulous, her hand was steady enough. The small black circle of the revolver's mouth gripped his eyes and held them. Esterhazcy quivered in his place.

"We are making for the Divinolf Marshes," he faltered. "Flat, uninhabited land for 200 miles. We are going to drop Haven there when we have taken the Ostrekoff jewels away from him. As for you—"

"Well?" she interrupted coldly. "I am interested."

"We are dropping you at the general's shooting box at Latchinska on our way home."

Her eyes were like points of fire.

Shall I shoot this man? We shall be safe then, Wilfred Haven."

"Let him live," he enjoined firmly. "Killing is no woman's game, after all. One has to remember."

She gave a little sob as she lowered her arm. All the fierceness died out of her face. Underneath that tight-fitting tunic he could see the quick rise and fall of her bosom.

"I hate you," she declared, her eyes suddenly flaming upon Haven. "But you are at least a man."

The wind, for a moment, had fallen. A blaze of lightning seemed to open the sky. Haven became rigid. He pointed to the farther seat.

"Go there, Esterhazcy," he ordered. "Patinsky is coming down," he added, turning to Anna. "I saw his feet upon the ladder."

PATINSKY had, at least, courage of a sort. He realized at once what had happened when he entered the saloon, and cursed himself for not having relieved Esterhazcy of his revolver. His own fingers stopped as though galvanized, as they crept toward his pocket.

"Anna Kastellane," Haven said, "your revolver is, I suppose, fully loaded. Look in the breech to be certain and keep Esterhazcy covered. You can do that?"

"I can do that," she repeated, examining the gun before she swung around in her chair. "I hope that he moves. I should be a happier woman even now if I had killed him."

"Shoot if he stirs an inch," Haven enjoined. "Keep both your hands flat on the table, Esterhazcy, until I give the word. Now, Col. Patinsky, you are listening?"

"I am listening," was the cautious reply.

"Take off your outside leather coat. See that your fingers don't stray one inch beyond the buttons. Remember, I'm watching—watching even your thoughts. I'm only waiting for an opportunity to shoot."

Patinsky had evidently no intention of allowing him to do so. He took off his heavy sheepskin-lined leather coat and let it fall to the floor, exactly according to instructions.

Haven lowered his revolver, took a quick step forward and seized Patinsky's arm. The latter made no resistance and submitted himself to an extensive search.

"Very good," Haven approved as he brought the matter to an end. "Now you can go and sit with your friend Esterhazcy at that table and we can have a little conversation."

Haven picked up the revolvers from the table before him and handed them to Anna.

"Out with them," he enjoined. She hesitated.

"Is it wise?" she ventured.

"It is wise," he assured her. "Unarmed, I can deal with any of these men, but they have the type of brain I don't trust. They'd wheedle these guns out of any hiding place we could think of if we left them to it. Out with them!"

Anna obeyed. One after the other the three weapons slid out the window of the plane.

"Patinsky," Haven said, "I'm going to ask you a question which Esterhazcy has already answered. If your reply coincides, well, we shall at least know where we are. If Esterhazcy has lied, trouble may ensue. Where are we bound for? What is your next stop?"

"The Divinolf Marshes," Patinsky replied.

"Quite correct," Haven agreed. "I am glad to see that you have a loud-speaking communicator there. Go to it and tell your pilot to change his course a few degrees southward and make for Odessa."

Esterhazcy promptly obeyed.

"Listen to what I am saying, my friend," Anna put in, laying her hand upon Haven's arm. "I am speaking the truth. They are not to be trusted, either of them. They are the type who would break their word of honor to God."

* * *

Later on the wind died down. Even the clouds disappeared and the plane rode smoothly southward under a clear starlit sky. Anna Kastellane alone of the quartet, after the remains of their meal had been carried away, once or twice closed her eyes and dozed. The

three men, face to face with the climax of their journey, made no attempt to sleep. Esterhaczy and Patinsky talked in a low tone throughout the night. Haven brooded in somewhat sullen silence.

"You are a crazy young man," Esterhaczy finally broke the silence. "Without our help you have not one chance in a million of getting out of Odessa alive."

"Why not divide the jewels, we will help you escape from Odessa, and the girl we will leave at the General's chateau?" proposed Patinsky.

Haven looked across at them regretfully. He was very young and human life had always seemed a sacred thing to him.

"I ought to have killed you both," he groaned.

SERGE ZAKOFF, newly appointed Governor of Odessa, sat before his desk in the large council room, when Anna was shown in.

The Governor swung around, looked at Anna steadfastly for a moment, and pointed to a chair. He himself moved to the place on the other side of his desk.

"So it is indeed you, my fellow student," he observed, as soon as Lydia Andrekovitch had left the room. "I heard of you last in Petrograd. How long have you been in Odessa?"

"A matter of 35 minutes," she told him, smiling, "and I have heard a good deal already of Serge Zakoff, the Governor."

He sighed. His was a thin, thoughtful face, with a mass of brown hair and brown eyes marred by too light eyebrows. He wore a severe, well-fitting uniform, a red sash tied around his tunic.

His eyes were fixed upon her, but without undue steadfastness. His pale face was expressionless. His surprise at seeing her having departed, he showed not the slightest sign of any other emotion.

Anna related the story of the troubles in the clouds.

"You are here, Comrade Anna," the Governor said, "and you are welcome, but proceed quickly, for I can hear that outside they are becoming impatient. How can I help you? First of all tell me this—is the American you speak of your lover?"

"He is not," she replied, a spot of color slowly flaming in her cheeks. He believes incredible things about me and he apparently dislikes me more than any one else on earth."

"Proceed then," Zakoff enjoined.

"You can help me, you can save our two lives and win our eternal gratitude," she explained, "if you will drive with me to the flying ground, or give me a permit which no one dare dispute, to depart with the American as soon as we are loaded up with petrol and oil, and order your guard to arrest Patinsky and Esterhaczy, if they attempt to force their way into the plane."

Serge Zakoff reflected for several moments.

"You are asking a great deal," he observed. "These men may make a grave business of it."

Zakoff drew half a sheet of newly printed note paper toward him and wrote upon it swiftly. He signed his name and, unlocking the drawer, produced a great seal with which he stamped it.

"This will take you out of Odessa," he announced, "and will secure the obedience of every one upon the flying ground."

She slipped the paper down the bosom of her dress and, leaning over, kissed him lightly on both cheeks. There were tears in her eyes.

"Serge Zakoff," she said, "you have made me your debtor for all my life."

She passed out into the street with a little farewell wave of the hand. Round the corner she found her taxicab waiting.

At the gate of the airdrome she was stopped in peremptory fashion by two soldiers. She produced the pass which Serge Zakoff had signed. They saluted and waved her on. An officer, crossing the flying ground, held up his hand. A glance at the pass and he, too, saluted.

Haven and the pilot, with their coats off, were storing away petrol and oil. There was a hint of unconscious triumph in her tone as she showed the former the magic slip of paper.

"We are at liberty to remain here, to buy oil and petrol at Government prices, and to depart when it pleases us," she pointed out with satisfaction.

There was a flash in Haven's eyes.

"Listen," he begged. "We have enough fuel in stock now to take us half over Europe. You are not thinking of waiting for those two?"

She laughed derisively.

"I am afraid," Haven said, to Anna Kastellane, "that I must ask for your assistance. I want you to feel in his coat pockets and his breast pockets. I shall shoot him if he makes a move."

"Wait for our executioners!" she exclaimed. "Why should we? How soon can we start?" she added, turning to the pilot.

The man shook his head angrily.

"You are passengers, you two," he declared. "Captain Esterhaczy is my master. I shall not move without his authority. We shall start ere for the night. It is necessary."

He felt an iron grip upon his arm. Haven led him into the furthermost corner of the hangar and then released him. Slowly he opened his pocketbook and brought out a pile of notes. The man, who had opened his mouth to protest, was suddenly dumb.

They found Olav in the saloon, staring at them in surprise.

"We are starting at once," Anna announced.

"We cannot start without Capt. Esterhaczy," the man objected sullenly.

"Get that out of your head," Haven enjoined, blocking the passage. "You leave Leon alone. Here's a thousand kronen. Put them into your pocket. There'll be plenty more to come if you behave yourself and obey orders. If you kick up a fuss, you'll be thrown out."

"But what will they do—the others?" the man demanded, stupefied. "We cannot leave them behind."

"We can and we're going to and that's all their is to it," Haven assured him as the engine began to roar. "Get back into the pantry, Olav, and look after things. We'll need some food presently."

Suddenly there was a bump and a jerk forward. One more bump and then a sensation of velvety smoothness. They were off the ground, mounting rapidly.

On the ground below the faces of Patinsky of the Polish Cavalry and Nicolas Esterhaczy were turned skyward to where a small black speck was disappearing in the distance and their eyes were full of hate.

SERENITY in the skies, exaltation tempered with exhaustion, marked the first stage of that amazing return cruise. On the evening of the second day, Haven produced his map and spread it across the table.

"I'm afraid there's nothing for it," he told her, "but to wheel north, cross over a portion of Germany by night, without lights, and come down in Holland. If we're going strong and the weather's good and we have enough petrol, we might even make England. The point is, however, that we daren't risk any of the frontiers."

"I wouldn't like to trust our present pair of cutthroats to far," he remarked, as he did his best to struggle into Esterhaczy's sheepskin coat which was several sizes too small for him. "There is just one thing more," he went on, after a moment's hesitation. "My satchel gets in my way when I'm taking over and I daren't loosen the chain up here—one lurch and it would be gone forever. There's no chance of callers here, so far as I can see. Couldn't I leave it with you?"

"You can cover it with your coat, and sleep with your feet upon it, or perhaps put it under your pillow?"

"Of course, I will take care of it," she promised. "Every day since I first met you I have been longing to know how you could ever release yourself from it without a key."

"And alas, you won't know," he told her with a good-humored smile, "until I hand it over. I've promised to let no one see the trick—not even the Archangel Gabriel, if he came down and offered to take care of it. I'll show you the moment we're out of this mess, however. Excuse me."

He raised her fingers to his lips. She gave them to him willingly enough, but though her eyes had grown kinder during the last 24 hours, her manner was more aloof. He knew quite well that there was something still between them of trouble or suspicion.

He caught a glimpse of a white face, as Olav leaned out from his pantry, an evil-looking face from its sheer animalism. For a moment Haven hesitated. He felt a curious unwillingness to leave her, yet, on the other hand, she must be safe. There was no possible harm which could come to her there. Olav was his bought slave, with nothing to gain by infidelity. Leon would be under his own control throughout the night.

He read the record, frowning. The altitude was 260 meters below that which he had chalked up before his descent. He leaned forward to look at the compass. They were traveling very nearly due north. He changed the control swiftly and they shot upward, then he turned round to Leon.

"Why didn't you keep the course I chalked up?" Haven demanded.

"I turned to avoid a wind pocket," the man replied sullenly. "There's another one coming. We were flying too high."

"What rubbish are you talking about wind pockets?" Haven asked curtly. "There's isn't a breath of wind or a cloud in the sky."

The man growled and pointed over his shoulder.

"Look behind, master, you will see."

Haven steadied himself with one hand and leaned toward the side of the car. Almost as he did so, some instinct prompted him not to prolong the motion. He turned back abruptly. Leon was almost bending over him.

"Why the devil don't you look over your own side?" he demanded.

Taken all together, Haven came to a prompt but most disquieting decision. Leon had a plan. He had meant to throw him out of his place and to take over the plane. Was he on his own or was Olav in the plot? Haven steadied down the speed while he reasoned the matter out. If Olav was in the plot, Anna might be in danger—he must make some excuse to hand over the control before long and get back into the saloon.

"Leon," he muttered.

"Master?" the man replied.

"I have a pain," Haven confided. "It was the coffee which Olav made me drink. Will you take over for half an hour?"

The man nodded and unfastened his strap.

"Don't alter the course," Haven enjoined, without undue emphasis, as he handed over the stick. "I'm sure you meant it for the best, but the course as it is now will take us to safety."

The change was duly effected. Haven lingered for a moment in the observer's seat. Then he swung himself onto the iron ladder and descended step by step until he pushed open the door which led to the saloon. To his amazement the place was in darkness.

"Anna!" he called out.

He fancied that he heard a groan, but in the same instant he felt a sharp flick upon each cheek, as though he had been struck with a whip, and almost simultaneously a suffocating sensation at the throat. His cry was stifled. He felt the blood rush to his head. Olav's face loomed up in front of him through the darkness.

"If master struggles," he threatened, "I pull the cord tighter. One more pull and master will be dead."

For a moment life surged away—even his tongue was powerless. He lost consciousness.

Haven opened his eyes upon what seemed to him at first some ghastly nightmare. He was lying upon the floor of the saloon and his arms, from his wrists to his shoulders, were bound to his body with strips of dried and uncured leather. His ankles were secured in similar fashion. More horrible still, around his neck, with a slip knot, was a strip of the same loathsome material. Olav, who was seated on a chair by his side, gave a playful little tug at the loose end and the agony at his throat recommenced. Opposite to him, in the most distant of the armchairs, was Anna, also bound hand and foot and groaning feebly. Her eyes were pools of horror. She called out to him piteously.

Olav chuckled and gave a further pull at the cord which he held, so that Haven almost shrieked with the agony of it.

"It would have been well to kill us!" he cried. "Now we must kill you. We throw you over when we come to the water. Water is safest. Perhaps I throw you over first," he went on, looking down at Haven. "I talk a little to the lady afterward. Yes?"

The man shook with laughter.

"Do not look at me," Anna begged. "Whatever you do, do not look at me. Try to keep his attention, if you can."

Haven tightened his lips and did as he was bidden. Nevertheless, even when he withdrew his eyes to look at Olav, he understood the meaning of the queer little noise that he had heard, in spite of the roar of the engine when first he had recovered consciousness. Anna had evidently discovered a portion of the brass clasp of the window which had a jagged edge, and she was rubbing the cord which bound her wrists steadily against it. Already her hand was covered with blood where she had slipped. Haven played his part.

"Listen to me carefully—there is no hurry," said Haven. "I will speak so that you will understand. We will forget this little quarrel—we will all four go together to London; there I will take you to

a bank. I shall not offer you stones of a pretty color which would not be worth to you as much as pebbles. I shall give you gold and kronen notes—all that you can carry. I will give you and Leon enough to buy a palace as big as the Czar's, as many wives as the Sultan of Turkey, and more wine or food than you can eat all your lives."

Haven paused, and the duration of that pause was the supreme agony of his life. His eyes were fixed on the distraught face of the man who was leaning toward him, his mouth open, the perspiration standing out on his forehead, struggling fiercely between belief and disbelief, afraid to come to a decision, yet fascinated by the pictures his captive was drawing.

Olav wiped the sweat from his forehead. He pulled his coat open.

"I hear," he said. "I hear all that. Perhaps I make a mistake, but Leon and I—We will have the jewels. You and the woman—" he pointed downward, "the water."

One awful, yet wonderful vision, and Haven for a moment closed his eyes. Anna was there bending forward, unhurried, calm, the fire of purpose in her violet eyes, her tongue playing lightly a cruel steel blade drawn back, four, five inches behind Olav's bulgy neck. Then in it went. There was a sound the like of which Haven had never heard before—the rending of human flesh. * * * Anna bent over her work. She drove the knife farther in still.

"You must deal with Leon," she said after she had untaped him. "Presently I will come to the ladder and call to you. Then we shall know that all is well."

He suddenly caught her into his arms. It was the wildest embrace of his life. * * * He closed the door of the saloon behind him and mounted the iron ladder.

Leon half glanced around at the sound of the mounting footsteps.

"It is finished, Olav?" he grunted.

There was no reply. Leon turned again and met Haven's fist crashing into his face. He collapsed with scarcely a groan. Haven snatched the stick away from his nerveless fingers and devoted the next few moments to steadying the machine.

As soon as it was running smoothly, he seized the already senseless man by the collar, unfastened the strap, and with the merest jerk of the arm sent him overboard. Then he touched the electric switch which showed him his map and drove happily into the darkness.

Haven's eyes were fixed upon the faint, indefinite horizon. He began to talk to himself—and, realizing the fact, stopped suddenly. Presently he found himself repeating a prayer. Then a storm of rain cooled the fever in him. He ached for the grim line ahead, which never materialized.

"Land!" he prayed. "Land! Show me land!"

Anna came out in wild disorder of hair and clothes, locked her arms around the rail, and looked anxiously up at him.

He pointed with his right hand ahead.

"Land! Cliffs!" he thundered. "Behind them, to the left there—Norwich! Bring me brandy, Anna, I'm choking. Hang something white out of the window. The place is bristling with guns."

All the time he was depressing the lever. They drifted, scarcely 200 fet high, over a golf course. They touched the ground like a graceful bird, ran bumpily for 50 yards, and stopped in front of the club paling. Soon they were surrounded by an excited mob.

Haven stood up in his place and waved his hand.

"Fetch Elisavets Osterkoff!" he shouted. "Cry out so that the whole world can hear! Tell the Prince I've kept my word!"

Then he toppled over and lay motionless. They had to lift him from his seat and there were people who whispered that he was dead.

IT WAS on the seventeenth morning that Haven woke with a curiously changed feeling in his nerves and body. He raised himself in the bed. He knew quite well that those white-capped women around him were nurses, that this must be a hospital and that he was in a friendly world. He called out, feebly enough at first. A nurse, who had been standing at the window, started at the sound of his voice and came to him at once.

"Where am I?" he asked weakly.

"In the Cromer Nursing Home."

"How long have I been here?"

"Seventeen days."

"Is that coffee I can smell?"

"It is, and you shall have some if you lie quiet," she replied, ringing the bell. "Don't talk too much, just for the present."

He stared at a kindly faced man who came toward the bedside with outstretched hands.

"Dad!" he exclaimed. "How on earth did you get here?"

"They cabled me—some one did—the day after you arrived," Norman Haven explained. "I caught a fast boat and here I am."

"Very sporting of you, dad. I hope it won't interfere with business too much."

Mr. Haven shook his head. He was a very capable-looking man, which was not surprising in the chairman of one of the largest bankers' trusts in America. He left after a half hour.

Then came sleep. * * * He woke at 6 o'clock, feeling almost ready to spring out of bed. The nurse brought him some tea, after which he lit a cigaret.

"Nurse," he said, "when I arrived, I had a satchel locked to my wrist by a chain. No, I didn't," he interrupted himself. "No—I forgot. It was in the plane. I took it off so that I could fight Leon. Still, there was a satchel," he went on, looking around the room. "It had a brass plate with 'American Embassy, St. Petersburg' stamped upon it. Then there was a dark brown chamois-leather belt around my body."

The nurse nodded.

"I dare say," she assented indifferently. "I wasn't here when you were admitted. All your belongings, though, would be very carefully looked after."

"I'm sure they would," he agreed, his eyes still, however, searching the room. "All the same, I shall ask the doctor whether I can have them brought here. You see," he explained, "they were the cause of my adventure, and it was some adventure, I can tell you. I had two dear friends in St. Petersburg and I swore before God that I would bring into this country whatever they entrusted to me. At times I thought I was beaten. At times it seemed impossible to succeed. But we did it in the end. We got through. Do you mind one more question?"

"I don't approve of it," she demurred.

"About the young lady who was with me? I thought perhaps she might have been in to see me. Is she here?"

"I really don't quite know," the nurse replied. "She was here a few days ago—a very beautiful young lady, she was—with a kind of foreign appearance. Spoke English as well as you or I, but with an accent as though she had lived abroad."

"Yes," Haven assented. "She was Russian, as a matter of fact. I hoped that she might be here."

"I'll ask Matron if she is coming back," the nurse promised, "or the doctor would be certain to know."

His father entered, followed by the doctor.

"You'll do," the doctor announced. "How would you like a few newspapers?"

"When I arrived here," Haven interrupted eagerly, "I had a chamois belt around my waist and an embassy satchel—that was behind in the plane—"

"Yes, I remember the chamois belt," the doctor remarked. "I took it off myself."

"I had two dear friends in St. Petersburg—you've heard me speak of them—the Prince and Princess Michael Ostrekoff. They trusted me with the contents of that belt and the embassy bag, and I brought them through, my God! * * * Never mind, I brought them through. I want them here while I lie and think about it. And dad—the girl? Anna Kastellane? I thought I should have seen her by now. Where is she?"

The doctor glanced questioningly at Norman Haven. The latter hesitated.

"My dear boy," he said, "it's all right, of course, but, naturally enough, while you were unconscious no one here understood the position. Miss Kastellane waited about for several days until the doctor pronounced that you were out of danger, then she hired a car and went away to her friends. She was going to telephone."

"And she didn't?" Haven asked anxiously.

"We haven't heard from her since," was the reluctant reply.

"And the satchel? My belt?" Haven insisted, with a sudden horrible presentment.

His father frowned.

"She appears to have taken them with her," he acknowledged. "The matron here—everyone—understood that they were her property."

Anna was there, bending forward, unhurried, calm, the fire of purpose in her violet eyes, a cruel steel blade drawn back, four, five inches behind Olav's neck.

LONDON seemed a strangely human city to Wilfred Haven as he trod its pavements for the second time in his life one April morning about three weeks later.

His turned from Bond St. into Clifford St. and rang the bell of a small house of singularly neat appearance. A somberly dressed manservant admitted him.

"Is Mr. Felix Drayton in?" Haven inquired.

Felix Drayton had few of the mannerisms of the profession of which he was at once a solid support and brilliant ornament. He had started the routine work of an office altogether too monotonous for his taste. At 40 years of age he had set up for himself, still under the mantle of the law, but taking only cases which interested him. He was, as a matter of fact, a particularly skillful and successful inquiry agent. He welcomed his visitor cordially but without effusion and waved him to a chair.

"War?" he inquired, alluding to the other's limp.

"No such luck," was the regretful reply. "I got rather knocked to pieces in that trip across from Russia I told you about. Our medical department at the embassy here turned me down last week, or I should have been off to training camp in a few days. Told me to go back in six months. Perhaps they're right. I did have rather a twisting. I want to devote the whole of that six months to clearing up—well, that matter about which I wrote you. I shan't have a moment's peace until we've got to the bottom of it."

"I like your way of outlining your case, Mr. Haven," he said.

"My duties apparently are threefold," he proceeded. "First of all, you wanted to discover the fate of the jewels, secondly the whereabouts of the young lady who had confiscated them—the two might be said to go together—and thirdly, having lost the instructions committed to your care, you wished me to discover the whereabouts of Elisaveta Ostrekoff, in order that you might at once explain the position to her. Incidentally, you wished me to set confidential inquiries on foot among the best-known jewelers and jewel merchants in case any portion of the stolen property should be offered to them."

"Quite right," Haven agreed a little wearily.

"The companion of your travels here," Felix Drayton continued, glancing at his own notes, "was a young woman calling herself Anna Kastellane. You were rather vague as to where you found her."

"Piecing together your story, so far as it concerns the young lady," Drayton reflected, "there is a strong suggestion that she was a spy."

"There is," Haven confessed unwillingly.

"I think we may take it for granted," Felix Drayton went on, "that the enterprise of Esterhazy and Patinsky was entirely a—er—private one. Patinsky was one of the few men in the world who knew about the jewels and Esterhazy was his accomplice. You got rid of them very cleverly. That left you alone with Miss Anna Kastellane. The attack upon your lives by the pilot and steward of the airplane was again, I think, a sheer attempt at personal loot, such an attempt as a person carrying about with him £3,000,000 worth of jewels in a confined space is—er—somewhat liable to. We arrive now at the young lady. What was her object in coming to England? Did she tell you?"

"She offered me very little of her confidence," Hayden acknowledged. "She seemed to me, at first at any rate, just like an ordinary refugee."

"Were you, or should I say are you, attached to her?"

"In a way I was inclined to be," Haven admitted, looking down at the carpet upon which the ferrule of his stick was tracing a mystic design. "It was all very difficult," he added. "When I discovered what sort of a house it was from which I had rescued her, I felt that I had been deceived and made use of. At Warsaw there were indications that General Grotzowill considered her his mistress or his possible mistress. Of course, as a Soviet spy—Grotzowill was known to be a monarchist—she may have been trying to get information from him."

"Yet during the later stages of your journey you seem to have trusted her a lot," Drayton remarked thoughtfully.

"What in hell could I do?" Haven demanded. "We had two of the foulest, most denegerate beasts to deal with you could imagine. We had to be allies against them, at any rate."

Felix Drayton lit a cigaret and pushed the box across to his visitor.

"Mr. Haven," he said firmly, "we

are starting well, but we have a very difficult task ahead of us. That young woman, according to your own showing, has the most amazing nerve and courage. She has had several weeks' start, which makes matters all the more complicated. What about her passport?"

"She had two or three," Havens confided. "She showed a passport in the train and I could see that she had another in her bag, which she showed me afterward at Warsaw. That was what first made me think she might be a spy."

"I should say there is no doubt about that," Drayton meditated. "The only point is—did she steal those jewels on behalf of the Soviet or on her own account? I'm having the Soviet headquarters here watched already on the strength of what you've told me. They're not established here properly yet, of course, but they have a sort of meeting place."

"If Anna Kastelenne stole those jewels," Haven said deliberately, "she stole them on behalf of the Soviet. That I am certain about."

They drank to one another and Felix Drayton resumed his seat.

"Now I'll tell you one thing about this affair that puzzles me," he confided. "I can understand the young lady called Miss Anna Kastellane being clever enough to keep out of the way, as she certainly is, but I cannot understand why my people have not been able to trace Elisavcta Ostrekoff. There can be no reason for her living under another title, or anything of that sort. Russian refugees are easy enough to find as a rule and Ostrekoff is a famous name."

"If the jewels have not been restored," Haven replied, "I shall explain the situation to her and pay her the estimated value. She will have to take money instead of the jewels."

"God bless my soul!" Felix Drayton exclaimed. "What did you say they were worth?"

"Three million pounds."

"But—but, my dear fellow," the other protested, "you did everything that was humanly possible."

"I've fixed it all up with my father," Haven confided. "Thank God, he's a rich man. It's going to be written off my account when he takes me into partnership. She may not have it all at once, but she'll get it within the next few years."

The telephone on Drayton's desk tinkled. He lifted the receiver to his ear and listened. His face showed no surprise. He might have been considering an invitation to dinner.

"Will you wait one moment, please," he begged.

Drayton placed his hand over the mouthpiece of the telephone and looked across the desk at his companion.

"Haskell's, the jewelers in Bond St.," he announced. "They have just rung up to tell me that one of the smaller Ostrekoff emeralds is being offered to them at the present moment."

Haven sprang to his feet.

"Come on," he cried. "How do we get there?"

"Try to remain as unconcerned as possible," Felix begged his companion, as they walked together toward Bond St. "It isn't likely for a moment that the women who is offering the jewels is Anna Kastellane. Any attempt at disposing of a haul like that would be done in a round-about way. Remember, we are not after one small emerald—it's the lot we want—£3,000,000 worth. Here, smoke a cigaret. You and I are going to look at platinum and gold cigaret cases. Leave everything to me, there's a good fellow. This is my job."

MR. RAYMOND HASKELL was, of all his craft in London, Paris or Rome, the doyen of fashionable jewelers. He was a thin, cadaverous-looking man of elegant appearance. His linen was always faultless, his nails almost too perfectly manicured. At the time when his manager phoned to Felix Drayton he was seated in his private office, slightly raised above the level of the shop, his famous magnifying glass in his eye and an emerald poised delicately between his fingers. After a minute examination he laid the latter down upon the little stretch of black velvet spread out before him and transferred his regard to his visitor. She, too, was in her way unusual, but certainly less distinguished. Her manner was complacent and devoid of all suggestion of haste.

"If you do not care to buy the stone, Mr. Haskell," she said, "I thought you might possibly be kind enough to give me some idea of its value, in case I should be disposed to advance upon it the sum of which my friend is in need. I do not, as a rule, interest myself in this sort of thing," she went on, "but, if I like people, I am always anxious to help them."

"The stone is interesting," Mr Haskell admitted, "and certainly valuable. It is one of those cases, however, in which, notwithstanding Your Ladyship's sponsorship, we should require to know the actual owner of the stone."

"You wouldn't object to making it up for me, I suppose?"

"Certainly not, my Lady," was the prompt reply. "Bring it to me as your own property and I promise that I will make you a marvelous pendant."

"And the value of the stone?"

The jeweler looked thoughtfully through those high windows down into his elegant showroom. His friend, Felix Drayton, had just arrived and, with a younger man, was inspecting some cigaret cases.

"It is difficult to say," he temporized. "If it were offered to me with a definite history behind it, and if it were approved by my gem expert, I should be prepared to give four thousand pounds for it."

The woman lifted it up and looked at it lovingly. Somehow, in her pudgy fingers, it seemed a less exquisite possession.

"Put it in a box, will you, please," she enjoined. "I'll carry it in my bag here and you must please send one of your assistants out to the car with me. Other people's property, you know! I'm always nervous with other people's property. My own jewels are insured and I take my risk with them at any time."

The car drove off. Mr. Haskell joined his friend.

"You don't need to worry with any of your sleuths so far as that lady is concerned, Felix," he remarked. "Lady Bott, her name is. Her husband was a city knight and though he wasn't a millionaire, she's good for what she cares to buy. Same dodge as usual, of course. She's offering the jewel for a friend and won't tell her name."

He turned away with a little nod of farewell. Felix Drayton led his companion across the street into a famous cocktail bar. They seated themselves in two easy chairs. The solicitor gave an order, then went in search of the telephone box. He returned in a few minutes.

"Lady Bott's club is the Alpha," he announced. "I shall have a man playing there this evening and a list of her principal associates in the morning."

At that moment Anna Kastellane herself walked in.

For an appreciable space of time, Haven was like a boxer taking the count insensible and insensitive. He sat grasping the arms of his chair, gazing across at the little circle of modish-looking men and women among whom Anna Kastellane was seated. There was not the slightest manner of doubt concerning her identity, nor, he reflected with a curious pang, was there the slightest manner of doubt, but that she had swept past him into the room without a gesture of recognition, without the slightest sign of ever having seen him before.

He dabbed at his forehead. Felix Drayton pressed another cocktail into his hand.

"We don't want to go at this affair of yours hull-headed," said Drayton. "There's more in it than appears upon the surface. The girl would never have attempted a bluff like that if she hadn't either great confidence in you or if she wasn't pretty hard pressed."

"Who are the people with her?" Haven demanded.

"Well, the dark, elegant-looking young man is Borie Roussky, who was once in the Russian Embassy here and who was sent over at the beginning of the Revolution to try and create friendly feeling with the new regime. The stout man with the black beard is Serge Melgounoff."

"He is a Russian of a different type—a great shipping man. I must confess that I don't know much about him or what he stands for. The languid lady with the beautiful eyes and sables is his wife. The pale young man with the face of an archbishop is the Grand Duke Peter—one of the heirs to the throne, if anything should happen to the Romanoffs."

"What on earth is Anna Kastellane doing in that crowd?" Haven exclaimed.

"She might easily have found her way there," Felix Drayton pointed out, "if my surmises connected with her are correct. I'm afraid that you'll have to make up your mind that your young lady friend is a spy—a very scheming young person indeed. As such, she might easily be connected with the two Russians—Roussky and Melgounoff. What they're all doing with Peter, though, one cannot imagine. There are explanations, of course, very simple ones. Even if the revolution in Russia fades out, I think the Romanoffs would have to go."

"This is all very well," Haven broke in, "but what about the Ostrekoff jewels? I'm terrified to death that at any moment Elisaveta Ostrekoff may arrive to claim them. Can't you approach this young woman at once and find out at least where we stand?"

"That would be changing our tactics a little," Felix Drayton mused. "Your idea, then, would be to accost this young lady, accuse her of having stolen the jewels and demand their return."

Haven winced, but he stuck it out.

"Well, why can't we do that, anyway?" he insisted.

Felix Drayton continued his lunch for a moment in silence.

"I suppose we could," he admitted. "And if you wish it, we will. It certainly is the most obvious course. On the other hand, it seemed to me that there was more than one mystery connected with the young woman's desertion of you at Cromer and the theft of the jewels."

"There certainly was that," Haven agreed. "But if you let her walk away now, what are you going to do when Elisaveta Ostrekoff comes along?"

"Oh, she'll have her jewels all right, in the end. I'll promise you that," Felix Drayton declared. "There may be a little more bloodshed, there may be even a few more undiscovered crimes before she comes into her own, but finally she'll have them. I should very much like to know what sort of a young woman we are to expect in Miss Elisaveta Ostrekoff."

"If she takes after her mother," Haven confided, "she is one of the most charming women in the world."

Felix Drayton nodded thoughtfully and helped himself to a cutlet.

"Well," he observed "it's queer how little reliance there is to be placed on Russian consanguinity."

Other people besides Wilfred Haven turned their heads and forgot to look away when, a few minutes later, a young woman with two companions was ushered into the restaurant. Beautiful girls were rather the rule than the exception at the embassy, but her beauty was of an unusual type. Her hair, even in the shadowful room, was yellow as corn. Her eyes were dark and deeply set. Her lips were parted with an almost childish interest as she glanced around. With her came an elderly woman with something of a presence, although her clothes were simple and unfashionable, and, following them, an elderly man with gray hair and mustache and a military bearing, one of that not uncommon type whose clothes and tout ensemble seem equally well preserved.

"But what is remarkable," Haven confided, staring across at her in dazed fashion, "is that, except that she is taller, she is the image of the Princess. I never thought that I should see hair and eyes like that again."

"The Princess who?"

"The Princess who with her husband is responsible for my trust. The Princess Ostrekoff, the mother of the girl for whom we are searching—Elisaveta Ostrekoff."

"The man is Col. Oliastransky, one of the earliest Russian refugees," said Drayton.

Felix Drayton lost his appearance of complete imperturbability. He glanced across the room. The entrance of the newcomers seemed to have created no comment among Anna Kastellane and her friends.

"It would be a queer coincidence," Drayton meditated, "if this should turn out to be the young lady of whom we are in search. Perhaps we had better hope that it isn't. To be asked to produce the jewels at a moment's notice might be embarrassing."

Haven shuddered.

Mario, the manager, who had been talking to the new arrivals, came smilingly across the room. He little knew what a bombshell he carried in his hand. Arrived at their table, he bowed to Felix Drayton.

"Mr. Drayton," he remarked, "you have the good fortune, as always. The most beautiful young lady who has entered my restaurant this season is inquiring about you. Her dame de compagnie and guardian suggest that you pay your respects."

"They came in, then, without being members," Felix Drayton observed, as he rose to his feet.

Mario leaned a little farther over the table.

"The Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff," he confided.

MARIO drew out the table to enable Felix Drayton to pass and escorted him across the room. The elderly man rose from his chair and shook hands in dignified fashion. The women bowed. The girl smiled dazzlingly.

"We were unfortunate enough to miss you this morning by a few minutes," the men observed. "Permit me to present you to my wife, Mme. Oliastransky, and the young lady who for some years has been our ward—the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff. I am Colonel Oliastransky, in my younger days of His Imperial Majesty's Guards."

It was all very formally done. Felix Drayton, who had lived abroad long enough to have imbibed Continental customs, lifted the fingers of the two women to his lips.

"Let me present my client," Felix Drayton begged, laying his hand on Haven's shoulder. "Mr. Wilfred Haven—Mme. Oliastransky, the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff, Colonel Oliastransky."

Haven greeted each in turn. It seemed to him that Elisaveta was even more beautiful at close quarters. The color of her hair was entrancing and the texture of it like fine silk. She smiled up at him with becoming timidity.

"You will forgive my saying that your resemblance to your mother is very striking," he went on. "I used to think that no one else in the world could possess such wonderful hair and eyes. I see now that I was wrong."

She blushed charmingly.

"We are interfering with your luncheon, I fear," Felix Drayton suggested.

"Let us meet for coffee," the Colonel proposed, with his eyes upon the dish which had just arrived, "or we will come around to the office of Mr. Drayton after luncheon—whichever you prefer."

"Might I suggest my office?" the latter begged. "This is a very intimate place and the matters of which we must speak are of some importance."

"Wherever you say," Madame assented graciously.

"In an hour's time, then."

"We will be with you."

Elisaveta caught at Haven's wrist and drew him down toward her. Her eyes were dancing with expectation.

"When shall I see my jewels?" she whispered.

Haven groaned in spirit, but it was impossible to look at her without an answering smile.

"You shall see them before long," he promised.

* * *

The two men returned to their table. Haven leaned back in his place with his hands in his pockets and a despairing frown upon his forehead.

They looked at the far end. Anna had left.

"And you say she's like her mother?" Felix Drayton reflected, helping himself to another glass of hock.

"Marvelously. Precisely the same eyes, and her mother's hair must have been exactly that color when she was young."

"Elisaveta Ostrekoff," Felix Drayton repeated thoughtfully. "The Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff. Yes, it sounds well. Our search, after all, wasn't a long one," he went on.

"It's astonishing, when you have a great fortune to offer, how soon you discover a missing person. If it had been the other way, my agents might have failed everywhere."

"I didn't imagine there would be much difficulty about it," Haven observed. "They told me in Petrograd, though, that the last time a letter got through it was from Florence."

The elder man pushed back his plate and ordered coffee and the bill. He had lunched very well and he had no intention of allowing a difficult situation to interfere with his digestion.

"I think," he declared, "that you had better leave most of the talking to me. By tomorrow I shall know something about your friend Anna Kastellane, and even if I have not discovered the whereabouts of the jewels, I may have discovered the best way to approach her."

* * *

In the pleasant afternoon sunshine which flooded Felix Drayton's library, Wilfred Haven found something pathetic in the appearance of the two older visitors. Col. Oliastransky held himself with the same military precision, but his black coat showed signs of many pressings, his trousers were faded, and the carefully repaired shoes and gaiters had passed their epoch of seamy service. His wife's toilette, too, left something to be desired in style. Elisaveta alone represented luxury. Apart from her beauty, her black georgette gown was cut by an artist, her silk stockings and shoes were of the latest mode. She wore no jewelry and the simplest of hats. Curled up in her easy chair she presented a fascinating picture.

"Mr. Haven, please," she called to him softly.

He came over to her side at once.

"Tell me what it is you have brought really. Is it jewels?"

"I am forbidden to open my mouth," he told her good-humoredly. "I had a very difficult job getting out of Petrograd and journeying over here, and I made one slight blunder. For that, my man of affairs has sentenced me to silence—while business is being considered."

She laughed up at him.

"Our anxieties have consequently been great and we should like to know from you at once, Mr. Drayton, what this young gentleman has brought us from the Ostrekoff family? If it is jewels—where are they? If it is money—how much is it?"

"The original bequest," Felix Drayton confided cautiously, "was a packet of jewelry."

"Jewelry?" the Colonel repeated. "To what value, Mr. Drayton? You must pardon our anxiety. The matter is of vital importance to us."

"You can set your minds at ease," Felix Drayton assured him. "The value of those jewels will be sufficient to free you all from financial anxieties for the rest of your lives."

"The amount?" Madame demanded.

Felix Drayton fingered his miniature mustache.

"You must prepare for a shock," he said. "The jewels might realize as much as one or even £2,000,000—"

"They are valued at three," Haven interposed stubbornly.

The girl's soft fingers twined themselves into Haven's. Even she could find no words, but her eyes were full of adoration.

"When can I see them?" she asked. "When can we—sell something?"

"Concerning the delivery of the jewels themselves there may be—I speak to you quite frankly—a brief delay," said Drayton, slowly.

Dismay settled upon their countenances. The girl withdrew her fingers from Haven's and suddenly eat upright. There was a flash in her beautiful eyes—half of fear—half of anger. She seemed to be years older.

"Delay?" she repeated, and even her voice had changed. "Why should there be any delay? The jewels are my property. Mr Haven, to whom they were intrusted, has arrived. Where are they, please?" she concluded almost sharply, as she swung around to face him.

"Delay to the delivery of the jewels themselves," Felix Drayton reiterated. "As regards money, there need be no delay whatever. Mr. Haven is, I understand, prepared to advance any reasonable sum before the banks close this afternoon," he added with a glance at the clock.

The girl's fingers sought Haven's again, although something bad gone from her feline abandonment. The seductive light, however, was back in her eyes.

"How good you are," she murmured. "But why did you frighten us?"

"Perhaps, Mr. Haven," Felix Drayton went on, "if you would make out a check for, say a thousand pounds, it will prove to our friends here that there is no serious hitch in the proceedings."

"A thousand pounds!" the Colonel gasped. "Certainly, certainly, Mr. Drayton. I am sure that Elisaveta would appreciate it. We should all feel much relieved."

"It will be wonderful," she acknowledged, as she watched him draw a checkbook and a fountain pen from his pocket. "But I suppose I am stupid. I do not understand why I should not see my wonderful jewels."

"Princess," he said "Mr Haven and I, as his representative, have simply to throw ourselves upon your indulgence for a few days. The jewels are close at hand and we believe them to be in safe keeping, but, for the moment, we cannot produce them and we cannot say where they are. There is also the point for you to consider—we have not asked for any proofs of identity or anything of that sort. Mr. Haven is too much impressed by your likeness to your mother to think it necessary, but when the larger amounts are dealt with, you must, of course, produce proofs that you are the person we know you to be. When that is done, Mr. Haven will hand over to you either the jewels or their full value in money."

THE ECSTATIC look was returning to the girl's face, but there was still the shadow of that calculating gleam in her eyes.

"Who is going to value them?" she asked shrewdly.

"All that will be equably arranged, Princess," he assured her. "Mr. Haven will discharge his trust honorably."

"I know I can rely upon you," the girl said, looking up into her companion's face. "It is just one's curiosity which almost hurts. You say so little, but there is a mystery somewhere, is there not?"

"There is a mystery," Drayton confessed. "It is a mystery which I hope will be cleared up within the next few hours, and, so far as the financial part of it is concerned, it will never affect you, because if you do not get the jewels, you will get their full value. Our young friend here is one of the fortunate persons of the world. He has a father who is known throughout England and America as a multi-millionaire. If you," he went on, turning to the girl, "are the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff, a fact which we look upon as already demonstrated, and he should be unable to produce the jewels, he will pay you their full value in cash. I think I can say that, Haven?"

"Surely," the young man agreed. "If you could just make up your mind," he went on, turning to the girl, whose fingers were now tightly holding his, "not to think of the jewels for a day or two but just to be content with the realization that there are £3,000,000 coming to you, probably before the end of the week, certainly before the end of the month—well that would take a load off my mind."

A young man who could produce £3,000,000! She looked at him with the fullest measure of her old adoration. He was handsome, too. A fine, strong-looking young man, and a millionaire!

"Very well," she promised. "Anything in the world you ask me I will do. But you must be my guardian. You must not leave me alone again."

The secretary appeared. He handed a bundle of notes to his employer. The latter counted them, put them in an envelope and passed it across to Elisaveta. Drayton scribbled some form of receipt. She moved to the table at his invitation and signed it.

"You must give me your address," said Haven.

Col. Olastransky coughed nervously.

"We were not quite sure how things would be with us financially," he explained. "We are staying at a very small boarding house in the Bayswater Road, No 23A. If Elisaveta wishes, and I am sure she will we can move tomorrow."

"How would it be," Felix Drayton suggested, "if you and your ward and madame if she cares to, of course, were to come here at the same time a week from today? We might have further news for you then."

The girl put her hands upon Haven's shoulders and dragged him down.

"Will there be some more money?" she whispered in his ear.

He ignored the faint quiver of anxiety in her tone and laughed encouragingly.

"You can draw £10,000 if you like tomorrow," he promised. "That is—unless I hand you over the jewels."

She held his head between the palms of her hands and kissed him on both cheeks. The color flamed into his face. A strand of her beautiful hair had brushed across his forehead. She released him, laughing mockingly.

"I discover that my guardian is a little shy," she murmured.

"Never mind. There will be a time when he knows me better."

"In less than two hours," she announced, "the shops will be closed." Drayton saw his visitors out himself, returned to his study and, standing on the hearthrug, took a cigaret from the box, which he first passed to Haven, and lit it.

"Well, we staved that off pretty well, on the whole," he remarked. "Quite a reasonable old bird, the colonel, but by George, what a beauty your ward is! You will find your hands pretty full, young fellow. How about the likeness to her mother, eh? Does that grow on you?"

"It is the most amazing thing I ever knew," Haven pronounced. "There is a picture of the Princess in court dress, painted at the time of her marriage, in which her height is not noticeable, and you would swear that it was a picture of Elisaveta. Her voice, too—everything. Drayton, do you think she is going to be absolutely furious if we don't get back the jewels?"

Drayton smiled.

"I think she will put up with the money," he replied. "I want you to clear out if you will now. If you can see me at 7 o'clock, I will tell you all I've been able to discover about Miss Anna Kastellane."

"You don't think I ought to go and see her myself?" Haven suggested doggedly.

"As a last resource only," Drayton enjoined.

Anna Kastellane, one morning a week after her luncheon party at the Embassy Club, stepped out of a taxicab in front of the Times Library to find herself immediately accosted by a passerby. Her face scarcely reflected the pleasure which the latter seemed to find in the meeting.

"This is the most fortunate thing that has happened to me for days," Boris Roussky said impressively. "Why do you never answer letters, Anna Kastellane?"

"Why do you write them?" was the cool rejoinder.

The very elegant young man bit his lips. Anna Kastellane was one of the conundrums of his very conceited existence. Her manner toward him was a continual source of surprise.

"I wrote you officially because it was my duty," he confided. "I wrote you privately because I wished to see and speak to you on a very important matter."

"What you have to say to me officially—which is all I want to hear—could have been said in your letter," she pointed out. "I live by myself in a small flat and I do not receive visitors. I explained that to you once before."

"When will it please you, then, to receive the official communication which I am asked to make to you?" he inquired stiffly.

"Here on this pavement and now," she answered. "I am listening."

He looked at her in astonishment. He was quite the Beau Brummel of his party, a young man for whom a great future was predicted, and he could scarcely pass through the various departments of the great undertaking with which he was connected in London without at least a dozen pairs of eyes following him wistfully. Yet this girl, for some inexplicable reason, was more than cold to him. She was even inclined to be rude.

"Official business," he protested, "cannot be conducted in such a manner. It is 20 minutes to 1. Will you lunch with me?"

"To be seen with you in a public place," she reminded him, "is almost the same thing as my coming to the offices. At the embassy, there was a reason for our meeting—to lunch a deux is a different thing."

"We can have a private room, if you like," he suggested. "There are several little places I know of close by."

She drew away from him in momentary disgust. He suffered no loss of composure. He looked upon her gesture as due entirely to nervousness.

"You can come to my flat this evening at teatime," she conceded—"at 4 o'clock or soon after. The address is No 4a Harford St."

"Delighted," he murmured. "And for luncheon?"

"Of that there is nothing to be said," she replied. "Good morning."

Boris Roussky passed on unwillingly, after a very florid farewell. He lit a cigaret and continued his stroll into Oxford Circus and down Regent St, casting about him in his mind for some possible explanation of her attitude. There had been reports about his cruelty during that month he had served on the Cheka. Officially he had been successful enough; as a human being, some even of his own associates had turned from him. After all, with his social gifts, London was the place for him. As for the girl, he had never yet found difficulty with any member of her sex. Her aloofness was beginning to intrigue him. She was different from these others who had imbibed the new doctrines. They were acquiescent to the point of sloppiness. After a course of them Anna Kastellane would be a positive tonic.

* * *

He drank green tea with lemon and smoked cigarets in the sitting room of her miniature flat in Harford St. that evening with a sense of great contentment. He was artist enough to appreciate the good taste of her simple furnishings, the value of her etchings and her other few but priceless objets d'art. The pearl-gray coloring of the walls pleased him. She, too, must be quite an artist, he decided. They would make a wonderful pair.

"Now for the business, please," she requested, as soon as he had finished his second cup of tea.

"It is you who drive one to forget," he observed. "However, you shall have your way. Here is one of the official mettere which I am asked to discuss with you. In this country the need for absolute secrecy does not occur as in Russia. Sergs Melgounoff is of the opinion that you should now become formally associated with us."

"I do not share Sergs Melgounoff's opinion," she announced. "I prefer to work, if at all, from outside."

He tapped a cigaret upon the table, hoping that she would notice his beautiful hands—the ring with the marvelous coat of arms—he forgot from whose dead finger he had snatched it. Anna Kastellane, he reflected, was inclined to be a little difficult. She must be reminded of certain things, very delicately but firmly. The mission was entirely to his liking.

"I do not think that a positive refusal would be acceptable to the committee, or, if you will pardon my saying so, advisable," he remonstrated. "There is excellent work which you could do regularly in our organization. You must remember that here in London there are no longer facilities for the work which you did so well in Russia and Poland."

"I agree with you there," was the calm reply. "It seems to me that my work has come to a natural termination. I am thinking, therefore, of discontinuing it, or at any rate, taking a holiday."

He shook his head gravely.

"Holidays are not yet for us," he declared didactically. "There are many nations to be taught the new doctrine, a whole world waiting for enlightenment. London should be a great center for us. There is much work which we could do very well together. My present secretary is stupid—I was thinking of offering you the post. The salary would be worth consideration."

There was a very curious expression which shone sometimes in her blue eyes, he meditated, as he looked across at her through the mist of cigaret smoke. If he had not been a very clever man, he might have misunderstood it. He might even have believed that his suggestion had been offensive. Then he suddenly remembered what probably lay behind it all. She meant perhaps to keep this great fortune which had fallen into her hands. Russian women were all lazy au fond, unless they had some strong impulse toward work. She was far too pretty really to be kept in the serious walks of life, although the attraction of working with him should have made more appeal to her. She dismissed the matter flippantly:

"I do not think that I should make a good secretary, Boris Roussky."

"Nor should I perhaps make you a good master," he admitted indulgently. "I may seem hard and severe officially, but in private life I have my weaknesses. I dare say you have realized, Anna Kastellane, that you are one of them."

"Am I?" she rejoined. "Well, go on, please, with the rest of what you have to say."

"The rest of what I have to say," he confided, "concerns the Ostrekoff jewels."

She looked up quickly. She had always known that this would come some day, but its arrival at that particular moment was a little unexpected.

"The director thinks, we all think" he continued insinuatingly, "that it is time we came to an arrangement with you concerning them."

"What sort of an arrangement?" she demanded.

"You are making my task difficult," he complained. "You know perfectly well that the property of the aristocracy of Russia has been declared forfeit to the people. The Ostrekoff jewels are part of such property. You did your duty as one of us to rescue them from the hands of the young man, Wilfred Haven. If he had had his way they would have passed out of our reach forever. For several reasons we think it best that you should now be relieved of them. The first is that we need money; the second is even more serious. Our position in this country is, as you know, precarious. The young man Haven, or even Elisaveta Ostrekoff herself, may appeal to the police, claiming that the jewels were stolen. In that case you might have to give them up——"

"So might you," she interrupted.

"We think not," he replied calmly. "In the first place, we have special facilities for disposing of them. In the second, although we may not yet be recognized, we are the only Government which exists in Russia today, and the enactment providing that the property of the aristocracy reverts to the people, from whom it came, has received the official seal. We can deal with the jewels, Anna Kastellane. You are not in a position to do so."

"How do you know that I have not sold half of them already?" she demanded.

"I am convinced that you have not done anything so foolish!" he exclaimed. "The jewels are not your to dispose of. They belong to the Government, which will soon be officially recognized as the Soviet Government of Russia. There would be very serious trouble if it were discovered that they had been tampered with."

Anna Kastellane leaned back in her chair and laughed. With half-closed eyes but widely parted lips, she laughed with the full enjoyment of one whose sense of humor has been irresistibly appealed to. He watched her at first tolerantly, afterward with something approaching annoyance.

"You are really very funny," she said at last. "I was not working for you at all when I fell in with that dear lamb of an American and made use of him to help me to get to Warsaw. I have worked for you—perhaps—but I am not your slave or the sleve of your Government. I stole those jewels on my own, and I rather think that I am going to keep them."

A very different Boris Roussky made himself evident. His mouth had contracted until the corners formed a sharp line. A frown which looked as if it had come to stay was upon his forehead. His eyes were like twin pieces of steel.

"If you talk in that way, Anna Kastellane, you may find yourself before long in great danger," he warned her, "danger from which no power on this earth will be able to protect you. You are a servant of the Soviet, a fact which you cannot be allowed to forget."

"And the Soviet demands from me the Ostrekoff jewels?"

"It does and it intends to have them."

"And you would like me to be your private secretary?"

"It would be a suitable post for you and one which I think you deserve."

She began to laugh again. He watched her in intense anger.

"Perhaps you are right," she admitted, wiping her eyes. "Perhaps I do deserve to become your secretary, to atone for ever having been mixed up with any of you. I will not punish myself so severely, though.

"Sooner than give up the jewels, I would rather return them to the young man from whom I took them."

"You are talking now like a fool, Anna Kateilane!" he exclaimed, with fury in his tone.

He opened his lips and closed them again. He paused to reflect. The girl was not such a fool after all. Why should not she be entitled to a share? He would probably be able to get it away from her afterward.

"Let us," he proposed, "explore the possibilities of an arrangement. I am inclined to agree with you. I think that some share, at any rate, should come to you for your courage and enterprise. Make a suggestion to me. I am your friend. I will talk it over with the department this evening."

She leaned forward and pressed the bell.

"Sorry to send you away," she apologized. "I have another visitor due and I think that I hear the lift. You can talk it over with your department, Boris Roussky, but the suggested arrangement had better come from you."

A trim little servant made her appearance. Boris Roussky had no alternative but to go. He bowed over Anna's fingers courteously enough, but it was not in the least like the visit he had intended, nor had it terminated in the hoped-for fashion.

He paused outside, looking up and down the street in search of a taxicab. His attention was almost immediately attracted by a man who was lounging on the pavement opposite and gazing meditatively up at the windows. Notwithstanding his many weaknesses, Boris Roussky was by no means a fool and he recognized a detective when he saw one. This man might be of the police—English or foreign—he might be the agent of a private inquiry office or he might be doing this on his own account. One thing, however, was very certain—his present occupation was watching the block of flats in which Anna Kastellane's abode was situated. Boris Roussky turned on his heel, entered the automatic lift, mounted to the third floor and caused himself to be readmitted to her presence. She looked at him in surprise.

"Back again," she observed coldly.

"I have come back," he confided, "to give you a word of warning. I do not think that you realize the dangerous position in which you have placed yourself by retaining possession of those jewels. For instance, a detective—an agent of the police, I think he is—is watching your flat at the present moment."

"If he is of the police," Anna Kastellane remarked, "he is probably there to protect me."

"He is more likely to be there to arrest you," the Russian rejoined bluntly. "I have warned you and I warn you again, Anne Kastellane, you cannot hold those jewels safely. From the point of view of the law of this country, you are nothing more nor less than a thief. Either the authorities will seize the jewels by force or some private persons will take them from you by theft. If the latter, they may cost you your life. You had better hand them over into our keeping and we will make a generous arrangement with you."

She rang the bell once more.

"I will consider the matter," she promised him.

COL. OLIASTRANSKY, his wife and his ward, the Princess Elisavata Ostrekoff, lunched on the following day in much magnificence. There had been no difficulty, with his slim, military figure, about buying clothes for the Colonel. His black morning coat and dark gray trousers, Burlington Arcade shoes and spats and Scott's silk hat all became him well and helped him to present a dignified and aristocratic appearance. With his wife the "ready-made" shops had not been quite so successful, but she, too, was a changed woman. Elisaveta had found a dark brown costume at the establishment of a famous French dressmaker in which she was more distractingly beautiful than ever. They did not repeat their mistake of the week before and invade the sacred precincts of the Embassy Club, but descended instead from their hired motorcar before the much humbler premises of the Golden Calf Restaurant in the neighborhood of Oxford St. Monsieur Cochot, the proprietor, struck an attitude at their entrance. He hastened to relieve himself of the dish he was carrying and came forward all smiles and bows.

"Monsieur le Colonel!" he exclaimed. "Madame! Mademoiselle! One perceives that things have happened. The good fortune? It is arrived, yes?"

"It is arrived," the Colonel assented solemnly. "Mademoiselle no longer Monsieur Cochot. My word has received tha fortune long promised to her by her parents in Petrograd. With it she takes once more her title. Behold, Monsieur Cochot, the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff."

Monsieur Cochot bowed and bowed again. The summoned Madame from behind the little counter from which she dispensed wines and aperitifs. They all talked together until the Colonel interrupted.

"It is enough," he declared. "The business of the moment is to lunch, to eat and drink of your best, Monsieur Cochot, and to receive a note of what, owing to your kindness and consideration, we still owe you."

Monsieur Cochot wiped a tear from his eye with the corner of the napkin he had been brandishing. Nothing could have been more welcome than such a windfall. He bustled his patrons to the best table in the restaurant, then darted off to interview the chef. Madame mixed aperitifs with her own hands and graciously accepted one. They were all remarkably gay.

"I wonder," the Colonel speculated, "what is to happen today—whether Mr. Haven will produce the jewels or more of these exceedingly pleasant banknotes."

The girl smiled happily.

"I do not very much mind," she confident. "I shall, of course, marry Mr. Haven. He will deserve it for bringing me this great fortune. Besides—I like him."

"Elisaveta is right," Madame Oliastransky declared. "The young man pleases me, too. He is handsome and, to judge from what his lawyer said, of great wealth."

"I am glad that he is rich," the girl reflected, pushing back an unruly strand of hair from her forehead. "I am delighted to know that we shall be rich for all our lives. If he were poor, I think I should reward him in the same fashion—I will marry him. I have grown so weary of our life."

Madame coughed.

"It would be discreet," she suggested, "if the details of what we have been through, of our dear child's sufferings, for instance, remained locked in our own bosoms for the present."

"Just at the moment, I think—what do you say, Henry my dear?

I think no mention at all of the Folies Bergerre, for instance, of the Carlton at Monte Carlo, the negotiation with the Hipodrome here."

The Colonel looked around nervously.

"Not a word, my dear," he agreed. "I am entirely of your opinion."

"It is a matter of common sense," the girl declared. "There are one or two friends whom we must forget also. I shall be as nice as I can to Wilfred Haven. Perhaps he will want to marry me very quickly—that would be better."

There was for a moment something calculating in those beautiful eyes, the mouth seemed a little older, the girlishness less evident. It was only a brief interlude, however. A moment later she was sipping her aperitif luxuriously, the cynosure, as usual, of every pair of male eyes in the vicinity.

"I think," Madame Olastransky assured her, with rather heavy archness, "that, when he sees you today he will want to marry you as quickly as you can trot off to a Registry Office."

"I wonder how long it really does take in this country," Elisaveta speculated. "America is so wonderful for that. You can get up from the luncheon table and come back to dinner married."

"With a Registry Office it is not a long affair," Madame Olastransky surmised. "The young man was very much attracted yesterday, it was easy to see. Today it will be his finish."

"And the good God be thanked," Elisaveta murmured fervently, "that this time it will be a serious affair. We shall travel. Yes, I have made up my mind about that. I shall have the most beautiful frocks in the world. I shall have my picture painted by that crazy French artist. We may have a yacht. For certain we shall have an apartment in Paris. There will be enough always for you two," she went on. "Very likely you will like to live in one of my houses while we are away. That can easily be arranged."

Madame Olastransky sighed. She had drunk two glasses of old red wine in the middle of the day and she was becoming sentimental.

"I remember your mother when she was your age," she mused, "before she became an Ostrekoff. She was the image of you as you are today. She, too, would always wear brown and dark brown fur. But the men who were in love with her!"

"No scandal, my dear," the colonel begged.

Elisaveta smiled.

"Perhaps in time," she meditated, "there may be as many men in love with me."

Madame Olastransky, after sipping her third glass of wine, became a trifle didactic.

"My child," she admonished, with some severity, "let us pray not. Too many admirers are bad for a beautiful woman, however good and sweet her disposition. Your mother, one could see, was sometime bewildered with life and her husband was not always happy. A man does not like to have would-be lovers around his house like bees about a honey pot. You will be rich and independent. No man will be able to offer you more than you will have. Keep your husband faithful and for the rest—a few privileges, perhaps, to one or two—but one or two only. In that way you are spared from embarrassments."

"Oh, la, la!" Elisaveta laughed. "Look at Pere Cochot's chicken which arrives!"

Haven, by arrangement, arrived at Clifford St. half an hour before the other three were expected. Felix Drayton waved him to a seat.

"That's a queer young woman you rocked across Europe with," he remarked bluntly.

"You have found her then?" Haven asked.

"Oh, yes, I found her easily enough," Drayton replied. "She was found from the moment you pointed her out to me in the Embassy. She's living in Harford St. and I should say that she's mixed up with some exceedingly dangerous people."

Haven folded his arms and sat back in his chair.

"Go on," he begged. "Tell me the worst."

"She's badly mixed up with those damned Russians who are streaming into the country," Drayton continued. "There's a colony of them already settled in London, you know—Bolshevists, every one of them—here to do all the mischief they can. I'm afraid that your young woman, Anna Kastellane, although she doesn't show up at their premises, is one of them, all right. That man, Boris Roussky, whom some of the refugees declared was so fiendishly cruel that the Moscow Committee sent him over here to save him from being torn to pieces—the good-looking fellow who was with her at the Embassy a week ago—is one of her friends. He was at her flat yesterday for an hour and he was seen with her in the West End during the morning."

"What I want to know is why she went off with my jewels," Haven remarked bitterly.

"I'm very much afraid," Felix Drayton confided, "that she was after them all the time for the Bolshevists. They collect trifles like that, you know."

Haven sat looking gloomily into space for some minutes.

"If she has not already handed over the jewels," Drayton went on—"and I can assure you that she has been watched day and night, and I have even devised a scheme to stop her entering the Aldwych premises, if she ever presents herself—there is just one chance of your being able to get them back. You may not like it, but you must remember that there is some one else concerned besides yourself. The young lady has been very clever throughout, but she has made a bad mistake—I dare say you can guess what that is."

"I'm damned if I can," Haven replied.

"She had to raise money, I suppose," Drayton continued. "Anyway, she did it. She took one of the emeralds and disposed of it—disposed of it and she has been paid."

"The devil," Haven murmured. "You mean the emerald that was shown to Mr. Haskell?"

Felix Drayton nodded.

"I have rather encouraged that little transaction," he admitted. "It seemed to be the only way of getting a hold upon the young woman. I have gone so far, Haven, as to guarantee Haskell against loss. He has bought the stone."

Haven bit his lip but he said nothing. The last hope was gone. Anna Kastellane was a thief, a common ordinary thief. She had made use of him. He had asked his life for her. This was the way she had repaid him.

"Tell me how it came about, Drayton?" he asked at last.

"Very simply," the other replied. "Lady Bott played bridge at a popular and quite high-class club in the West End of London. One of the members was a Frenchwoman—a Madame Lefarge—wife of the great jeweler in Paris. It was easy to discover that it was Madame Lefarge who had offered the stone to Lady Bott. It was almost as easy to discover that Madame Lefarge had visited Anna Kastellane twice at her flat in Harford Street. The connection once established, everything was easy. A servant at the club saw Madame Lefarge hand over the stone to Lady Bott for valuation on the same day that she had visited Anna Kastellane."

"Why didn't you interfere and stop the sale?" Haven protested.

"Simply because on your behalf I wanted this hold over the young woman," Felix Drayton repeated. "Now you know how you stand. If it had not been for this single transaction, I am afraid your chance of getting the jewels back would have been a pretty slim one. You see, after all, we can despise what they call their Government in Russia, but they have passed that law confiscating the jewelry and property of the aristocracy, and if you go to Anna Kastellane this afternoon and demand your jewels, I should say it is ten to one that that would be her explanation. It may be true that she has parted with them. If so, it is for you to decide what to do. If she has not, you can threaten her with the police court. She has tricked you badly enough, but we are one up on her now. Whether she has the rest of the jewels still or whether she has not, you can send her to prison. She may get away with her story of having handed them over to the Government to whom they belonged, but she cannot get away from the fact that she first helped herself to one of the stones, sold it and accepted the money. Madame Lefarge paid her in bank-notes."

"It is damned clever of you, of course, Drayton, but I hate the whole business," Haven declared. "I'd rather she had flung them into the sea, I'd rather a hundred times she had handed them over to her filthy friends without meddling with them."

Felix Drayton raised his eyebrows.

"Will you give me her address?" Haven requested.

"She has a flat on the third floor of No. 4a Harford Street," Drayton replied. "Shall I write it down?"

"You needn't. I can remember it."

"You're going to see her yourself?"

"What else is there to do?" Haven demanded passionately. "She left me lying unconscious at Cromer and decamped with three million pounds' worth of jewels which were in my care. I don't want to go to the police, although you seem to have trapped her, all right. I just want to hear her own explanation from her own lips."

Drayton was toying with a pencil, drawing a little design on his blotting paper, and made no remark.

"If she really is one of these crazy Bolshevists," Haven went on, "and simply sold one of the stones because she had no money, I guess I will have to let the whole thing go. If she has once parted with them, she certainly would never be able to get them back again, whether she was sent to prison or not."

"I doubt," Felix Drayton mused, "whether she has parted with them. I think in all probability, if we sit tight, within a week or two we will hear of another stone upon the market. You'd have her then where she belongs. She couldn't put up her bluff about the jewels belonging to Russia any longer. She'd either have to hand them over or go to jail. I don't want to influence you too much, Haven," his adviser continued, "but those jewels belong to Elisaveta Ostrekoff. She may accept your money instead, because the poor kid seems to be half starving and she's a decent sort, but the jewels are hers, and if you carry out your trust as you should, I take it that you ought to chuck sentiment and see that Elisaveta Ostrekoff has what belongs to her."

"I expect you're right," Haven acquiesced, a little drearily.

"You take my tip, my dear fellow," Felix Drayton concluded. "Go and see the young woman if you want to and have it out with her, but if you have a fancy for Russians, I should go nap on your little Princess. She's the most beautiful thing I have seen and the sweetest. She's taking this affair very well, too. Some girls would have turned sulky and declared that they wanted nothing but their jewels."

"She's all right," Haven admitted. "All the same, you can't alter things."

Drayton leaned over and patted his young friend upon the shoulder.

"You'll have to stick it out, Haven," he enjoined. "Take it straight from me—don't get mixed up with that young woman, Anna Kastellane. I'm sorry if my advice goes against the grain, but I've got to give it to you all the same. She's proved that she's a wrong 'un, proved it up to the hilt. Cut her out."

There was a discreet knock at the door. Punctual to the moment, the three expected visitors had arrived.

THERE was a slight air of nervousness about two of the newcomers for the first few minutes after their arrival, and, even though fortified by their very excellent luncheon, they took their places with some trepidation. Elisaveta alone seemed perfectly at her ease and beamingly happy. She let her hand rest in Haven's and drew him toward her with a smile of invitation.

"Will you please come and sit where you did the last time?" she begged. "You give me confidence. I can feel that the whole thing is not a dream when you are there."

Haven obeyed with a touch of self-consciousness. She smiled irresistibly across the room at Felix Drayton.

"Well," she continued, "have you any more bomb shells? Remember I have not lived in Russia since I was a child and I am not used to them. Am I to see my jewels or is there to be another shower of bank notes?"

"You take this little contretemps in very sporting fashion, Princess," Felix Drayton observed, with an appreciative bow. "I wasn't at all sure that you wouldn't march along today with a lawyer and a Scotland Yard detective and start bullying my client and myself."

She stole an upward glance at her companion.

"I should never try to bully Mr. Haven," she murmured. "Why, it is he who has brought me my fortune."

She held his hand for a moment tenderly. Madame smiled beneficently from her place. The colonel nodded approvingly. Felix Drayton sighed.

"I congratulate you, Princess, upon your common sense and your discrimination," the latter declared. "Now we are all going to be very frank with one another. I must ask you these questions as a matter of form. You have told us that you are the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff, but the law would require some proof."

Elisaveta dipped into her bag and handed out a passport and a small packet.

"I have ll other names," she confided. "You will find them all there; also you will find my mother's photograph and my father's. There is a bundle of letters written by my mother from the Ostrekoff Palace, in St. Petersburg. There is also my birth certificate. Beyond that, it is well known that Colonel Olastransky was in the Tsar's household and was afterward my father's steward, Madame here was dame de compagnie to my mother before she married the colonel. They went to live in Nice 18 or 19 years ago, and, when the doctors ordered me out of Russia as a child, I was sent straight to them."

"Our own passports are here," Colonel Olastransky volunteered, "and we can produce any other evidence of identity you require."

"There is also this locket of my mother's," Elisaveta sighed, producing an old-fashioned ornament set with brilliants. "I am supposed to be remarkably like her."

"Is all this necessary?" Haven intervened, a little impatiently. "We can all make mistakes sometimes, but nature can't. You are more like your mother, Elisaveta, if I may call you so, than I could have believed possible. I was very fond of your mother."

"I hope some day," she said, softly, with another swift upward glance at him, "that you will be very fond of me."

Her eyes compelled his, but there was a touch of sadness in his smile as he looked down at her. She was distractingly pretty. If only that could mean what it ought to mean to him!

"Very well, then, we will proceed," Felix Drayton announced. "It is my duty to tell you, Princess, that Mr. Haven—after having literally fought his way across the Continent with your jewels, and met with a variety of adventures, which he will tell you about some day, I have no doubt—temporarily lost possession of them on his arrival in England. While he was unconscious they were taken away. At present we do not look upon it as an ordinary theft, and I know that my young friend is hoping to recover them. Supposing, however, he is not successful, he is, fortunately, well enough off to be able to do the great and quixotic thing. He intends to hand you the amount that the jewels would have produced—as near as it can be determined—in cash."

"I think it is noble of him," she declared, enthusiastically.

"It is an honorable action," Colonel Olastransky conceded.

"I am gratified to hear you say so," Felix Drayton observed, "because, although no conversation has passed upon this subject, you must know that legally he is not in any way liable. He has brought you today a check for £25,000.

For a moment no one spoke. Then the sense of those wonderful last words seemed to reach them all simultaneously. Madame beamed. The colonel nodded in grave appreciation. Elisaveta's expression was seraphic. Drayton rose to his feet and brought the check across to her.

"Within the next twenty-four hours," he continued, "we shall probably know whether the jewels are recovarable or not. If not, we shall have to try to arrive at some idea of their value, and my young client has arranged with his father, who, I dare say, you know is a very wealthy banker, to transfer stocks and securities to the amount decided upon into the name of the Princess."

"In the meantime, any further sum of money you may require my client can procure. He thought that this would probably give you a convincing proof of his intentions."

The colonel turned to Elisaveta.

"You are satisfied, Princess?" he asked.

"Entirely," she assented. "I would trust Mr. Haven in any case. I think he has been wonderful. The only complaint I have," she added, "is that up to now he has told me so little about my father and mother and of the last time he saw them."

"It won't be very cheerful hearing, I'm afraid," Haven admitted. "It was only an hour or so before the final tragedy."

Madame leaned forward.

"If that is all the business for today," she suggested graciously, "why should we not invite Mr. Haven to dine with us tonight and tell us what he can of those last days? Elisaveta's mother," she added, turning to Haven, "was my devoted friend when he were young together."

"Do come," Elisaveta whispered.

Haven hesitated. He was conscious of a queer sort of apprehension as he met the soft invitation of her eyes. She was too beautiful for any man to look at unmoved. She fired his imagination almost as much as she puzzled his inexperience.

"May we reverse it?" he begged. "Let me ask you all to dine with me. My father has had to go back to New York and has saddled me with a great house—Number 12A Grosvenor Square—many servants and nothing for any one to do. It will be such a relief to the chef—probably stop his giving notice before my father gets back."

"We shall be delighted," Madame assented, rapidly running through in her mind the list of shops where she would be likely to find a suitable evening gown.

"At 8 o'clock, I suppose—or half-past?" the colonel suggested, rising.

"How I shall look forward to it!" Elisaveta murmured.

"Let's say cocktails at 8 o'clock," Haven replied. "We can sit about before dinner if it isn't quite ready. What about joining us, Drayton?"

"Delighted," the latter accepted promptly. "Do you mind staying on for a moment, Haven? I want just a word with you about a different matter."

The visitors took their leave. Drayton resumed his seat, lit a cigaret and pushed the box to his companion.

"I'm glad you asked me to dinner, Haven," he confided. "Not only because I'm sure I shall get a thundering good one, but I find those three people immensely interesting. I can't think why one has never heard of the girl before."

"She told me that she had been living very quietly abroad," Haven observed. "The Ostrekoff remittances seem to have become very irregular since the war. She has not even used her title until this news came."

"Very sensible of her," Drayton agreed. "I find all three of them most intriguing. I'm afraid I haven't been of much use to you yet, Haven, but I'm awfully glad you came to me. I can promise you won't have a very heavy bill of costs. I'm getting all my fun as I go along."

"You mustn't say you've been of no use to me!" Haven protested. "You traced the sale of that stone the moment it was offered and you have given me the thing I wanted—Anna Kastellane's address—almost as soon as I asked for it."

"You are going along there now, I suppose," Drayton reflected, stretching himself out in his chair.

Haven acquiesced.

"I am going there at once. It will be the devil, but I want to get it over."

"You wouldn't like me to go with you, by any chance, I suppose?" Drayton suggested tentatively.

"Thanks very much, old fellow, I certainly shouldn't."

Haven had risen to his feet, but his host remained seated.

"Are you going to tell your young friend that Elisaveta Ostrekoff has materialized and is asking for her jewels?" he inquired.

"I don't know," Haven replied. "I don't know what I shall say and what I shan't."

"Well, for example," Felix Drayton persisted, "are you going to tell her that you know she has sold one of the stones belonging to the Ostrekoff jewels to Lady Bott and had the money for it?"

"I may. I just want to see her look me in the eyes and answer one question I shall ask her. Very likely, when she has done that, I shall come away. It is all that matters really."

"Bad as that?" Drayton murmured.

"As bad as that. I'll be getting along, if you don't mind."

"Don't be in such a hurry," the other begged. "It isn't 4 o'clock yet—barely time for calling. I wish you'd let me go with you."

"Well, I shan't."

"You see," Drayton went on, "you're back in London now, a city of law and order and all that; taxicabs, omnibusses, crowds of people in the streets, policemen at every corner. It doesn't seem as though there's much of a chance for wrong-doers in London, yet there's a hell of a lot goes on here, Haven, that you never read about in the papers."

"You'll read about it in the papers, all right, if anything happens to me," Haven promised. "I dare say you think I'm a fool in London, but I don't mind telling you that I still have my favorite automatic in my pocket, just as I had in Petrograd, and on the way over, and I am boxing for half an hour every morning, so as to get back into fighting trim. If any of Anna Kastellane's Russian friends are lying in wait for me, they won't find it a walkover."

"You've had some sort of a warning?" Drayton asked him suddenly.

"No, I shouldn't say that," Haven answered after a moment's pause. "I fancied I saw a fellow slouching

about in front of my house last night who was remarkably like one of the two we left in Odessa. They were the ones who were really after the jewels on their own account."

Felix Drayton coughed.

"What about the young lady?" he suggested dryly.

"Oh, I know," was the impatient reply. "But I haven't begun to believe yet that Anna Kastellane is a thief. This man is, I know. He wanted to go shares with me when he ran me to earth in the Prince's shooting box in Poland. He's the sort of fellow who would have murdered me afterward for my share if I'd agreed."

Felix Drayton rose thoughtfully to his feet.

"Perhaps it's just as well, then," he remarked, "that the jewels aren't in your possession. If he finds that out, he may leave you alone. Number 12a Grosvenor Square, isn't it? Very well, then, I'll be around about 8."

Felix Drayton, when his friend had left him, returned to his place at his desk and sat for a moment in gentle and apparently aimless meditation. Then he drew the telephone book toward him, found a number and asked for it. In a few moments he was connected.

"Is that Barclays' Bank," he inquired, "Audley Street Branch? * * * Good. Could I speak to Mr. Gubbins? * * * Yes. * * * No—a private matter. I won't keep him a minute. Felix Drayton, the name. Thank you."

There followed a brief silence during which the latter studied his fingernails thoughtfully. Then he became alert.

"That Mr. Gubbins? Felix Drayton speaking.

"Look here, Mr. Gubbins, I don't want to ask you to do anything unprofessional or to divulge any bank secrets, but if you feel at liberty to do so, I should like you to answer me a perfectly harmless question. You know my profession. You know I wouldn't suggest anything that might reflect on your discretion. * * * Good. That's understood, then. If you don't wish to answer my query, I promise I shan't be offended. A client of mine—Mr. Wilfred Haven, son of Norman Haven, the great American financier—gave a check an hour ago in my presence to a certain young lady in this office. It was an open check for £25,000 payable to Elisaveta Ostrekoff. * * * Yes, all that. Well, my question's harmless enough, but don't worry yourself. There is no doubt about the genuineness of the check. If it was for £250,000, Mr. Haven could meet it, many times over, and so far as I know the young lady has a perfect right to the money. I simply want to ascertain whether it has been cashed yet * * * It has? I rather thought it might have been. * * * Beautiful? One of the most beautiful young women I've ever seen in my life. * * * You're quite right—Russian. * * * No, the elderly gentleman wasn't her father. He was the husband of her dame de compagnie—a Colonel Oliastranesky. I'm exceedingly obliged to you, Mr. Gubbins. The matter has no significance except that it helps me to build up a theory, and you know how difficult that is sometimes. Good-bye. Many thanks."

Felix Drayton replaced the receiver. Not a cloud disturbed his serene countenance. He was, in fact, perfectly happy. There was nothing in the world he loved so much as being puzzled—and he was puzzled.

HAVEN stepped into his car and arrived within a few minutes at Number 4A Herford St. He ignored the automatic lift, mounted the stairs two at a time and rang the bell of the third-floor flat. The neatly attired maid looked at him inquiringly. It occurred to him that Anna might have adopted some other name and he changed the form of his question.

"Is your mistress in?" he asked.

"I'm not sure, sir," the maid replied. "If you will tell me your name I will see."

"Mr. Haven—Mr. Wilfred Haven."

He stepped into the tiny hall. The maid was absent for some minutes. When she returned she threw open the door of a sitting room.

The gentleman, miss," she announced.

Haven passed into the room, and for a moment he was conscious of an unexpectedly poignant surge of emotion. His knees felt as they had done the day he first stepped out of his hospital bed. His eyes were hot. He was aware of an immense anxiety. There was no change in her, though. It was Anna Kastellane, precisely as he had known her, who rose and came forward to meet him. There was something faintly deprecating in her upraised eyebrows, something in her expression, he fancied. He held out his hand, which she took readily.

"So you found me out and you really mean to be friendly with a thief and a criminal?" she asked.

"I mean to be friendly with you," he answered.

"You have come after your jewels," she challenged him.

"Of course I have," he assented. "Where are they?"

She rang the bell and gave an order for tea. All his impatience seemed to have departed. He was quite content, lounging in his low chair and looking at her. Although she appeared very little changed physically, he detected now a certain alteration which he found it difficult to define. During those hectic days of tragedy and wild excitement which they had spent together she had been all the time

"So you found me out and you really mean to be friendly with a thief and a criminal?" she asked.

inspired by a tumultuous spirit of life. She was ready for any emergency, mistress of herself on every occasion. Today, when she must at any rate have reached some measure of security, the sustaining fire of those days seemed to have burnt out. She was inclined to be listless. She reminded him of a person who had achieved success and found disappointment at the same moment.

"What have you been doing to yourself?" he asked. "You're different somehow."

"Observant man. I have brushed my hair back. They will not believe you are Russian unless you wear it that way, and it really had such an awful time during that expedition of ours that at first the hairdresser here could do nothing with it. There used to be a very good coiffeur at Odessa, but we had no time for frivolities there, had we?"

"We certainly had not," he admitted.

"Talking about changed appearances," she remarked abruptly, "what about yourself?" You are ever so much thinner."

"I was quite ill at Cromer," he confided. "I wasn't likely to feel much better, was I, when I recovered consciousness and found you gone? I'll be all right soon. I'm too big to kill."

"You have been worrying about the jewels?"

"Of course I have," he answered wearily. "I'm not worrying so much now, though. Your eyes are exactly the same glorious shade of blue. Just at present that seems more important."

"Have you come here to pay me compliments?"

"No, I came to wring your neck," he rejoined. "How dared you leave me like that without a word?"

"I have often wondered myself. I just had to. I thought I saw something huge tumbling into my hands. It disappointed me. Most things do."

"You not only robbed me of my jewels," he went on, "but you took away every penny of money I had."

She laughed softly.

"Why, that was nothing—the money, I mean," she protested. "I had to come to London, had I not? Your father was there—a wealthy man. I knew that you could get whatever you wanted. Think how much we saved by not having to pay for the airplane!"

"It was not the money," he reflected. "It was the sheer brutality of the whole thing—to leave me without a word, stranded there, after all that we'd been through together."

She lit a cigaret and pushed the box across to him. When she spoke, she ignored his last words.

"How have you been passing your time in London?" she inquired.

"Finding out things about you."

"Well, what have you found out?"

"That you are a Bolshevist spy, for one thing."

"Yes, I am a spy," she confessed. "But that was not a discovery. I had already told you that."

"That you had sold one of the Ostrekoff jewels, for another thing," he went on.

"Rather dangerous that, wasn't it?"

"I had to live," she answered simply.

There was a lengthy silence. There were many things he wanted to say, but the glamour of her presence kept him curiously tongue-tied.

"Perhaps it was as well for you," he reflected, "that I had more muscle than brains. I might have left you in that narrow house that looked out upon the boulevard."

She shook her head.

"You could not have done that," she told him. "You would have heard my cry in your ears for the rest of your life."

The maid brought them tea, a straw-colored beverage with a slice of lemon floating on the top and two quaintly formed cigarettes in the saucers.

"You need not touch that, unless you like," she remarked. "There is whisky and soda on the sideboard."

"You have men visitors, I see," he muttered jealously.

"All my visitors are men."

"Do they come after you or the Ostrekoff jewels?"

Both. One—the most dangerous of all—comes for the jewels, but he would like me thrown in. Some day I shall probably ask you to kill that man for me."

"Why put it off?" he asked. "I felt danger in the air when I got up this morning. I have that same wicked little automatic in my pocket that served us so well a short time ago."

She sighed.

"It is a pity I do not expect him this evening," she said. "You saw him at the Embassy Club."

"The elegant-looking hounder?"

"How well you describe him! He is terrible."

"Why do you get mixed up with such a crowd?" he asked passionately. "What have you to do with them or they with you? Break it off, Anna. I'll stand by you. I'll find plenty of others who will, too. They probably got hold of you before you understood. You can chuck it. If they want the jewels, let them have them. I didn't come here to talk like this," he stormed, his features quivering with emotion, "but I can't help it. I'm going to say the one thing I swore I wouldn't—whatever you are and whoever you are, Anna, I can't get on without you. I love you, Anna. I want you more than anything else in the world. I'll get you out of any trouble you're in. I don't care a damn for anything that happened before you stabbed that man's fat neck in the airplane and I kissed you afterward. We'll start life from there. If you've been a spy, you're not bound to go on spying all your life. I'll buy you off or fight for you—I'll do anything so long as you come to me."

Her eyes called him and he was across the room with a single movement. His arms were around her. For one long minute their lips met.

"You really do care—like that, Wilfred?" she whispered feverishly. "Can't you take the past for granted? Are you sure that the ghosts of it will not rise up and haunt you?"

"Give me yourself—now and for the remainder of my life," he begged. "I'll deal with the ghosts."

Her arms tightened around his neck.

"Perhaps they may not be so terrible, after all," she confided.

"Nothing that you have ever done or could do is terrible," he insisted. "I'll hear it all when you choose to tell it to me—in five, ten, fifteen years' time, if you like. Take me to those men who've been making a spy of you. Let's deal with them and finish the whole thing. Let them have the jewels, if they want them. I'll pay Elisaveta Ostrekoff for their loss. I'll take you to America. You'll be safe there. We'll settle down and I'll chase the nightmares out of your life."

She was sobbing quietly in his arms. He tried to dry her tears, but she stopped him.

"Let me, please," she begged. "It is the first time I have broken down and it has been so difficult. * * *"

It might have been any time later when he rose to his feet and she let him go. The maid had come in to draw the curtains, but Anna had waved her away. The gray twilight had a charm of its own. She took him by the arm and led him to the window.

"You see the man standing there?" she pointed out tensely.

"I see him," Haven answered cheerfully. "What do you want me to do with him?"

She wiped the remaining tears from her eyes and laughed at the same time.

"I want him left alone," she declared. "He is not really doing any harm—only they watch me—these men—day and night. You are right, Wilfred. They have not got them yet, but they want the Ostrekoff jewels. Think of the irony of it, my dear—they want the Ostrekoff jewels to pay for their printing, to pay for their foul licentious living, to pay for all the things their terrible creed stands for."

He gazed at her, puzzled. She swung away from the window. Suddenly she gripped him by the arms. Her fingers seemed imbued with a strange force. She looked up into his face, and there was a terrible anxiety in her strained lips, in her beseeching eyes.

"Wilfrod," she cried, "this is the real you, is it not? You meant what you said? You would forget it—if it were written that you had to forget? You would forgive—if those things you believed of me were true? Take me at my worst. You care for me enough to forget?"

He folded her in his arms. He said very little, and what he said was incoherent, but she was content.

With the coming of happiness life flowed so easily back into the ordinary channels. In a quarter of an hour's time Anna Kastellane was mixing cocktails at the sideboard. Haven had moved across toward the telephone.

"You don't mind if I ring up my people?" he begged. "I've four guests coming to dine at 8 o'clock, and I forgot all about it, and it's past six now."

She laughed.

"That seems a little hard upon your friends."

"You can be a guest, too, if you like," he suggested. "In fact, there'd be an element of humor in the situation if you came along."

"Why?" she asked. "Don't tell me that you are giving a dinner to some of my Bolshevist chiefs?"

"I'll tell you in a minute," he promised, as he took up the receiver. "Just let me speak to Parkins. * * * That you, Parkins? * * * Good. Look here, I've got four—perhaps five—people coming to dinner. Will you make it all right with Francois? Cocktails at 8. Dinner as soon as he can let us have it afterward. * * * No. I'll leave it entirely to him. Anything he likes. You'll see to the wine, of course. I shall be back in plenty of time to dress. Tell Francois that one of the guests is a young lady, so he'd better have ices and that sort of thing."

He set down the receiver. She held out a wineglass to him.

"Come and hold this while I shake," she invited. "Then you can shake mine for me."

The cocktails were poured out. He passed his arm around her waist. There was only one toast they could possibly drink.

"And now?" she asked as she set down her empty glass. "Perhaps you will tell me what you mean by saying that there would be an element of humor in my presence at your dinner party tonight and that you have a young lady coming?

"Let me warn you that I am slowly making up my mind to accept your invitation."

"So much the better," he rejoined with a grin. "Only, if you come, do bring the jewels along with you. I'm entertaining the disappointed young lady and her entourage."

"What disappointed young lady?" Anna demanded.

"The young lady who has been waiting for the jewels," he explained.

She paused in the act of mixing another cocktail and looked around at him with an expression of hopeless bewilderment.

"Am I crazy or are you?" she asked.

"Well, I don't know," he replied. "I'm a little crazy with joy, but I don't think it's affected my intelligence. I mean the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff."

She continued to look at him blankly.

"What about her?"

"She's my guest at dinner this evening. She's arrived from abroad with a Colonel and Madame Oliastransky to claim her jewels. You don't need to worry, dear, if you've parted with them or if it means danger for you to give them up. I can square the young lady. She seems a good sort and I think she'd just as soon have cash."

"Where did you say you found her?"

"I employed a sort of private detective to track her down directly I arrived," he explained. "I couldn't think of anything else to do, because you had the letter in the satchel, containing instructions as to how I should find her. It wasn't a long job, either, and if I'd met her in the street, I would have gone up and told her all about it. Her likeness to her mother is the most extraordinary thing I have ever seen."

Anna Kastellane set down the shaker she was holding and retreated to her easy-chair. She covered her face with her hands and whether she was laughing or crying Haven had no idea.

"Please mix some more cocktails," was all she said and all she could be persuaded to say.

HAVEN'S dinner party was a great success. Col. Oliastraneky, in a dinner suit which fitted him perfectly, although he frankly admitted that he had bought it from a famous second-hand emporium that afternoon, looked the very prototype of the elderly and distinguished guardsman. In his slow, deliberate English he told several amusing stories, and if he drank an extra glass or two of champagne, he remained at least coherent and dignified. Madame, with the lines of anxiety smoothed out from her face, was perhaps a little too sentimental, a little too tearfully reminiscent of past glories, and she had a habit of patting Haven's hand and then Elisaveta's in a manner which the former found distinctly embarrassing. Her completa happiness, however, and her deep content with life and all her immediate sur-

roundings, was so ingenuous that every one accepted her exuberance with toleration. Elisaveta herself and Felix Drayton were perhaps the two most silent members of the company; Elisaveta because she could scarcely keep her eyes from her host, and Felix Drayton because he was bored stiff with Madame Ollestraneky and completely fascinated by Elisaveta. Haven, from the first, had been in wonderful spirits. He found it a positively humorous affair to have to part with three million pounds to Elisaveta because Anna Kastellane had only laughed at him when he had demanded the return of the jewels.

Every one seemed busy making arrangements for the future, building fairy palaces, stuffing them full of dreams, and planning visionary voyages to enchanted lands. Haven, amongst whose faults conceit was certainly not included, realized somewhat late in the day that in all Elisaveta's sentimental imaginings he himself was the central figure. He tried to tease her into a different frame of mind.

"You wouldn't drag an old bachelor like me half over the world to smell drugged flowers and bask on golden sands," he mocked. "What about my work?"

"Why should you work?" she pleaded. "You are rich—I shall be rich, too. One only works to make money."

"You'd soon get that out of your head if you lived in the States" he laughed. "My dad's one of the best in the world, and there's nothing he wouldn't give me if I asked for it, but I know that he expects me to have learned enough about banking to take his place when he's had enough of it. Look at him now. He's over 60 years old, and he was in the chair at the biggest conference of bankers that's ever been held at Geneva."

"All the world knows about Norman Haven," the colonel declared expansively. "He is a very remarkable man. It will be a great privilege and a pleasure to meet him."

"I know that I shall love him," Elisaveta whispered.

Haven proposed coffee and liqueurs a little abruptly and led the way into the library. Elisaveta and madame, accompanied by the colonel, wandered off into the drawing room to see the Corots. Felix Drayton took his host by the arm.

"You're in great spirits tonight, Haven," he remarked. "You found the young lady?"

"I found her all right," was the joyous acknowledgment.

"Did she hand over the Ostrekoff jewels?" Drayton inquired curiously.

"To tell you the truth," Haven confessed, "we scarcely spoke of them. I gathered that there was some slight difficulty which she seemed to find rather humorous. And then—well, we talked about something else and I forgot all about them."

"Forgot all about the Ostrekoff jewels!"

"Absolutely!" Haven acknowledged. "You see, old man," he went on, passing his arm through his companion's, "I don't know whether you've guessed it, but I'm crazy about her and it's all right."

"You mean that you've asked her to marry you?"

Haven assented, looking as little like a fool as was possible under the circumstances.

"You're not serious about the girl here, then?" Drayton went on.

"I never was serious about her," Haven rejoined indignantly. "She's terribly attractive and she seemed to start in by being affectionate and that sort of thing, but I've never cared a snap of the finger for any girl except Anna."

"Well, I'm damned!" Felix Drayton murmured.

"Aren't you going to congratulate me?" Haven asked, as he lit a cigar.

"I'm not sure that I am able to," was his candid reply. "You see, Haven, you mustn't be angry with me, my profession has made me rather a pessimist, and, from the scanty information we have, this young woman is something of an adventuress, isn't she? She's distinctly mixed up with the worst gang of political desperadoes in Europe and you know for yourself that she's a thief."

"No trifles of that sort," Haven declared, "make the slightest difference. I've seen her kill a man in what you would probably consider the most bloodthirsty fashion. I've seen her use her influence with the Red Governor of Odessa, and I know she stole the Ostrekoff jewels and that I've got to pay for them. All the same, I'm going to marry her the first moment I can and I wish it were tomorrow."

"You appear to be a young man who knows his own mind, at any rate," Drayton observed. "Will you promise me to wait just one week till I get some more reports in?"

"I won't even promise to read your reports," was the indifferent reply. "In fact, if you gave them to me, I should probably tear them up."

"What about the Princess?"

"Well, I think I'm doing enough for her," Haven declared bluntly. "I'm giving her a fortune, and the money is the chief thing with her, anyway. If you ask me what I think about her present attitude, I believe she's a simple little thing and she's just carried off her feet with gratitude."

"I'm not altogether so sure about the simplicity," Drayton meditated, "but she certainly is the most beautiful creature I've ever seen in my life. How you can—"

Elisaveta, and madame reappeared, followed by a footman carrying the coffee tray. A moment or two later the butler, who acted as major-domo of the household, entered the room and approached Haven.

"You are being inquired for on the telephone, sir," he announced. "I was unable to distinguish the person's name. You are connected in here, sir, unless you would prefer to speak from His Grace's study."

Haven accepted the instrument from the man's hand and glanced apologetically around.

"Wilfred Haven speaking. Who is it wants me?"

It was the cockney voice of Anna Kastellane's maid that answered him.

"I'm sorry, sir, if I've done wrong, but I don't know another soul in London to ring up and it's about Miss Kastellane, sir."

"What about her?" Haven asked quickly.

"She's been and disappeared, sir."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"Just that, sir," the young woman confided. "She gave me permission to keep a little dog and I take it out for a walk every night from 9 till half-past. When I went out this evening Miss Kastellane was in the sitting room, reading the evening paper. When I came back, everything was as usual, the newspaper was on the floor near the chair where she had been sitting, but not a sign of her there or any where else. I've been worrying around for the last hour and then I remembered that you'd left your address in Grosvernor Square and telephone number on her table. I hope I did right, sir, to ring you up."

"I'll be round in five minutes," was the swift reply.

Haven replaced the receiver with steady fingers. Nevertheless, he had lost all his color, there was a steely look in his eyes, his lips were set in a murderous curve.

"I'm terribly sorry, but you'll have to excuse me, all you people," he announced. "I must go out for a short time. Something unfortunate has happened."

Elisaveta clung to his arm.

"Must you go, Wilfred?" she whispered.

"I must indeed," he answered, moving toward the door.

"It isn't any trouble about—about the jewels or my money?" she asked tremulously.

"It hasn't anything to do with you at all," he assured her. "Your jewels or your money are perfectly safe. Drayton, can you come with me? It's important."

"Rather," was the prompt reply. "My car will be here. I told him to be early."

"Do excuse me, all of you," Haven begged, looking back from the threshold. "Order what you like. Parkins will send for a car to take you home. We'll all meet tomorrow."

Elisaveta released her grip of his arm reluctantly. He had never even noticed her tremulously upraised lips. He dashed down the hall without hat or coat, followed by Felix Drayton. They were in Harford St. in less than three minutes.

On the whole, the little maid was fairly coherent. She admitted noticing that a large limousine car had been drawn up within a few yards of the entrance to the flat. It had been empty, the chauffeur had been standing about in an attitude of inattention and he had winked at her. She had gone on to the corner, and there, perhaps, she had to admit herself at fault. She had seduced the policeman on duty—who was her beau for a few minutes every evening—to walk some distance along Down St. with her. They had stayed talking very likely for quite 10 minutes. She was allowed out for half an hour, and the dog apparently had many acquaintances in the neighborhood.

Her mistress was nowhere to be found, and as the door of her kitchenette had been open the whole of the time since her return from her promenade, it must have been during her absence that her mistress had left. Felix Drayton was a skillful cross-questioner. His tone was too crisp to invite prolixity and too friendly to provoke alarm.

"Who is your mistress' most frequent visitor?" he inquired.

"She never had but one regular," the maid replied. "A very tall, elegant gentleman he was, with beautiful eyes and a grand smile. He must have been a Russian gentleman by his name."

"What was his name?"

"Mr. Boris Rousesky."

Anna yawned and let the newspaper slip from her fingers. The lift outside rattled into its place and she looked curiously toward the door. It was improbable that her little handmaiden should have returned so soon. Even realizing that, however, she felt no uneasiness when she saw it slowly opened. It was closed more quickly. Boris Roussky stepped into the room.

"Anna Kastellane," he begged, "I ask your pardon for this intrusion. Believe me, it was wholly involuntary. I rang the bell in vain, I thought you must be out and I just opened the door to see. You have not heard the news, perhaps?"

"I have heard no news."

"Slakoff is here—Ivan Slakoff."

"How on earth did he get into the country?" she asked.

"These things have been arranged before," he reminded her, with a shrug of the shoulders. "This time, I admit, he has risked his life and liberty, but he gained the interview he desired with a Cabinet Minister. He leaves at midnight tomorrow and his is at Aldwych Buildings for an hour only. The matter of the Ostrekoff jewels and your letter of resignation from our Secret Service are both under discussion. It was suggested that I should come around and see whether you were willing to confer with Slakoff and all of us before our decision is taken."

"You could have telephoned," she pointed out.

He brushed the suggestion away with a motion of mild contempt.

"For a woman with a brain, Anna Kastellane," he declared, "you sometimes surprise me. In what words would one have announced to you over the telephone that such a man was in this country and waiting to see you?"

She smiled.

"It might have been difficult," she admitted.

"He does not press you to come," Boris Roussky continued. "I myself am inclined to think that it might be almost hopeless. Your case is a bad one and although we have done our very best to close that over, you may know that there has been a very serious leakage of information from your department to Grotzowill in Warsaw, who is undoubtedly in sympathy with the Whites. Your letter of attempted resignation is in itself an offense. Slakoff has scant feeling for those who look backward."

"If you do not think it is worth while my going, then," she asked calmly, "why do you trouble to fetch me?"

"Slakoff does not press it. I do not press it. As a matter of fact, in 10 minutes it will be too late. My car is downstairs. If you care to drive to Aldwych Buildings and talk with Slakoff, it might make a difference—otherwise I am afraid that not even the Ostrekoff jewels will buy your life."

She looked at him intently.

"Why should my life be in question?"

"Because Slakoff does not recognize neutrality," he explained. "If you abandon an enterprise, he counts you as an enemy, as surely as if those leakages of information of which I spoke had been traced to you and you were discovered to be a traitress to the cause. If you are an enemy, you sign your own death warrant."

Anna Kastellane sat back in her chair, twining and untwining her fingers. She knew very well that twenty-four hours ago she would have laughed this man out of the place, she would have felt in her blood all that gay contempt of death which a love of adventure had bred in her. Tonight there was a difference. She wanted to live. Life meant something new to her. Risks were no longer so well worth taking.

"So Slakoff is against me," she murmured.

"We all are, more or less," was the firm but regretful reply. "You have not treated us well, Anna Kastellane. You did good work when the Revolution started. You have done excellent work once or twice since. Lately, however, you have wandered. You have spent periods of time immersed in your own affairs. We have evidence that your outlook itself has changed. Slakoff is gravely suspicious that you never intended to hand over the jewels to the committee. He thinks that you intended to break away. He believes that is your present intention. He will not have it."

"Then what is the use of my coming with you?" she insisted.

"I do not want to seem an alarmist," Boris Roussky continued earnestly. "We are in a country where deeds of violence are best avoided. They create prejudice against us and they are, in fact, our last resource. Slakoff himself realizes that. We are in a perilous position here and were any suspicion of illegal actions cast upon us, we might be given our passports. You see how frank I am with you. Therefore Slakoff wants to make one more attempt to arrive at an understanding with you face to face. You need have no fear. I don't suppose one of us has touched a firearm since he landed in this country. The old methods do not do here—we know that. This is simply a matter of a few plain words between the head of the cause which you are offending and yourself. I have a closed car and you can be back in half an hour. You need not even trouble to put on outside clothes."

"Very well," she assented suddenly. "I will come with you."

She smoothed her hair carelessly before the glass, followed him out of the room and into the car.

* * *

The premises of the Anglo-Russian Trading Co. as that organization holdly called itself, were apparently making little effort to conceal their nocturnal activities, although no gleam of light was visible except in the hall. The blinds of a long row of windows were closely drawn and the front door, with a burly commissionaire on guard, stood open. The latter saluted Roussky and permitted his entrance and the entrance of his companion without question. They mounted in the lift to the fifth floor and Roussky led the way to an apartment at the end of the corridor. Here another commissionaire was guarding the door, but he, too, allowed the arrivals to pass in without question. They found themselves in a large office filled with a crowd of about twenty people, mostly young women typists. Every one seemed to be working at great pressure and most of them wore green shades to protect their eyes from the electric light.

Boris Roussky paused to whisper for a moment in the ear of a gray-bearded man who sat at a desk by himself. He nodded, rose at once and softly opened an inner door behind his desk. Almost immediately he reappeared. Roussky and his companion were ushered into the apartment which a brass plate engraved in three languages announced as being Directors' Room.

SIX men were in conference—four seated at a long table and one, apparently a secretary, standing by the side of Ivan Slakoff, who was seated in an armchair and was evidently presiding over the meeting. The latter rose, with the aid of a stick, and bowed to Anna Kastellane. He uttered no word of greeting nor did his lips part at that moment in any sort of smile. She took her place in the chair pointed out to her, which was next to Slakoff himself, and, for the first time in her life, though she had often been summoned to conferences which might easily have meant disaster, when she had felt the need of measuring every work she spoke and knew that she was all the time in peril of her life, she was conscious of an unusual sensation which she recognized as fear.

There was something portentous in this silent and peaceful gathering which had been lacking in the fiercer atmosphere of those rooms guarded by soldiers with drawn bayonets, while the rifles of the executioners were spitting in the street outside. The curved middle window of the room, half open, a heavy screen before it blocking all outgoing light, faced cityward. The traffic in the streets had long since diminished to an almost negligible quantity. There was the occasional hooting of taxicabs, but the two most human sounds in the world—the roar of a ceaseless stream of vehicles and the continual falling of footsteps on the pavements—had died away. Below the window, the roofs of the buildings spread out to where the barely visible dome of St. Paul's reared itself in the far distance, like a shrouded monument rising out of a misty sea. Slakoff's quiet voice called her suddenly back from her involuntary mind-wandering.

"I am glad that you have come to see us, Anna Kastellane," he said. "A few minutes' talk was necessary."

She listened to his voice and she looked into his face with a new confusion of ideas. It was the face of a visionary with sad, rather tired grey eyes sunken cheeks, a mouth that was firm and severe but not necessarily cruel. His voice seemed to her one of the softest and most kindly she had ever heard.

"They tell me, Anna Kastellane," he went on, "that after having served those who have worked for their country's freedom since your college days, and stood with them through some of the cataclysms of the earlier revolution, you wish now to desert them; also that you have stolen, or shall I say acquired, a quantity of valuable jewels which, according to the laws of the new Russia, are the property of the state, and that you refuse to give them up. Are these things true?"

"They are true," she acknowledged, "except that I deny the theft."

He looked at her thoughtfully for several moments. Meeting his eyes, it seemed to Anna Kastellane that she saw something behind that kindness which caused her to shiver slightly when he spoke again.

"Why do you wish to desert the cause which you have adopted, Anna Kastellane?" he asked.

She steeled herself for brave words.

"Because of the hideous atrocities which have been committed in the name of freedom," she replied. "Because of this wholesale killing of innocent and guilty alike, if they happen to be monarchists or suspects.

"Because of the foul, ugly license which has broken out like a disease on every side. I have come even to doubt the ultimate aims of those who have become the rulers of the people."

Slakoff leaned back in his chair. His fingertips were pressed together, his eyes commanded her attention.

"Youre, alas, is the purely feminine mind, Comrade Anna," he pronounced. "You cannot realize the eternal truth that to pass forward to a new era, when one is engulfed in a disastrous epoch, there must be ugliness and sin, cataclysms and the letting loose of a whole flood of evil passions.

"To build a great cathedral, the whole neighborhood around is made foul and ugly with broken roads, with masses of concrete and mortar, with the hideous jungle of scaffolding poles. Yet the time comes when the scaffolding poles disappear, when the cleaners have completed their tasks, nature has done her part, and the cathedral is built, a standing monument of beauty. Supposing the builders had stayed their hands because of the sordid ways they had been forced to tread, then there would have been no cathedral and a great inspiration would have been lost to the world. There are so many illustrations, Anna Kastellane, that I shall leave you to think them out for yourself, but you, in your attitude today, represent so much that is precious to the coming Russia that I must talk to you. Remember that the fairest summer morning is always the one after the thunderstorm of the night, when trees have been ripped out of their beautiful homes and killed, flowers have been destroyed in great and ruthless masses, fruit trees have been stripped of their offerings. Yet in the morning, the black, jagged clouds have gone, the sun rises in the blue heavens and the air is sweeter for what has occurred. That is what we pray for, even now, Comrade Anna. * * * France is a fine and prosperous country. The massacres of her Revolution, the destroying of her weeds, was as ruthless as anything that has happened amongst us. Remember, Anna, that the Russian mind is the hardest."

Slakoff paused for a minute. Leaning back in his chair, his hands now resting upon its arms, his eyes seemed to be seeking earnestly, almost pleadingly, for her sympathy.

"You see, Comrade Anna," he

went on 'It is this first generation of ignoramuses whom we must labor to set free but it to you—the young intelligentsia of Russia—to whom we must appeal for sympathy or, after all, we may make a most colossal failure of what I still claim has been so finely begun. It is not our aim to make of Russia a nation of sensual robots. We want to make it the freest and the greatest country for the most enlightened race of human beings. Therefore, Anna Kastellane, we do not wish to lose the sympathy of such women as you.'

The secretary, a deformed young man with an intelligent but almost terrifying face, and the hot eyes of an enthusiast, leaned over his master and spoke a few rapid sentences. Slakoff listened to him unmoved. Afterward he turned back to Anna.

'Remember this, Comrade Anna," he said impressively, "even the architect's fingers are sometimes stained by the building materials. You must not look upon me as one apart from the evil deeds that have been done in these days, that good may come of them. I, too, have signed death warrants and have seen them executed. I, too, have refused to reprieve the guilty and have had those swept out of this life who have stood in the way of progress. On this sheet of paper, for instance, which has just been pressed into my hand, are the names of four people whose deaths are demanded. One of them is yours."

Anna gave a little start at Slakoff's quietly spoken announcement. Curiously enough, instead of looking at him she glanced immediately away at the hunchback by his side. She saw in his eyes exactly what she had expected—the lust for blood—which had first revolted her. He whispered again in his master's ear. The latter motioned him gently but firmly to be silent.

"I am to die if you are able to kill me," she demanded, "because I hesitate about giving up the Ostrekoff jewels?"

"By no means," Slekoff assured her. "You are down on this list, the fatal list I suppose I should call it, for other reasons."

"May I at least know what they are?" she begged.

He looked at her sorrowfully.

"You are here," he confided, "because—very likely in your first instinctive revulsion against the terrible Juggernaut which your delicate fingers, together with the hard hands of millions of others, had started on its progress—you resented of your activities and you went to the other extreme. You became a traitress to the cause which you had embraced. You went to the enemy's camp, not openly, but secretly."

Real fear now for the first time seized upon Anna. She suddenly seemed to realize the ruthlessness which lay behind this simple reception of her. No wonder they had not troubled to plan an abduction or to risk leaving her in her flat with a dagger through her heart. As a traitress sentenced to death her end was certain. There was another branch which dealt with such affairs.

"Since when have you made that discovery?" she asked.

The secretary licked his dry lips and spoke in a hard clear tone

"Anna Kastellane," he announced, "visited several times, during the course of the present year, a house in the Boulevard Nevsky, frequented by various members of our committee. She kept herself aloof, but sought to make the acquaintance of our friends. She appears to have gathered news from Comrade Thorloff, since executed, concerning suspected people—four of whom were warned by her and two of whom escaped. Amongst others she caused to be conveyed to the Prince and Princess Ostrekoff, dangerous enemies of the people, an intimation of the exact day on which their arrest was planned and suggestions as to a probable means of escape. Before then she was in communication with members of staff of the White Army, who are in arms against the republic, and she supplied them at times with news as to the movements of our troops and our plans concerning Wareaw. she visited Gen Grotzowill—"

Slakoff waved his hand a little wearily.

"That will do, Michael," he interrupted. "You have proof—ample proof?"

"Your signature attached to the paper" the young man reminded his chief "will end the matter."

Slakoff took the paper into his hand

"Yes," he agreed calmly, "it will end the matter. Well, Anna Kastellane, even the great Robespierre permitted his victims sometimes to speak in their own defense. You have something to say to us, perhaps?"

The blind was flapping against the screen and she gazed thoughtfully out of the briefly disclosed window space. It all looked so homely and placid The night mists had rolled away and the weather-beaten facade of St Paul's was clearly visible now, with its exquisite curves and its grey nebulous background. It would have simplified matters, so far as she was concerned, if after all the plans had crashed into the North Sea Then she thought of her preserver and she hated herself for that momentary regret.

"I have only one thing to say," she announced—"certainly nothing to plead. As a student, perhaps my dreams, and those of the others, were a little too Utopian, but all the same I was disgusted to the very soul with that foul hogey of a revolution which was born of our efforts and our visions. I could see no hope for its future, no merit but only evil in keeping the thing alive For that reason it is true that I tried to undo some of the harm I had done."

"You admit, then," Slakoff asked, "that the sentence against you is a just one?"

"The sentence is just," she acknowledged. "Traitors, honest or otherwise, have always known their fate beforehand."

"THERE is this matter of the Ostrekoff jewels, Anna Kastellane," he remarked. "My friend and Comrade Kohnstam there, who has much to do with finance, has justly reminded me of it. The Ostrekoff jewels, Anna Kastellane—are you disposed to hand these over to the Government of Russia?"

She made no reply for several moments.

"It does not seem," she reflected at last, "that they are going to be of much use to me."

"For whom were they intended when this rash young man took charge of them?" Slakoff inquired.

"For Elleavete Ostrekoff, the daughter of the Prince and Princess," she confided.

Slakoff frowned. It was a very slight gesture, but his whole expression seemed transfigured.

"A fitting but an unworthy end," he pronounced bitterly. "We will try our best, Anna Kastellane—especially with you, an educated woman—not to revert to the language and phrases of which we are all heartily weary. Logically, however, you and I know well that these jewels represent allegorically, if not actually, the sweat of the serfs of Russia. They exist by reason of the blood of Russia's children They are legally confiscated to the State. I think that you yourself, Anna Kastellane, must recognize the justice of that edict.

The man with the protuberant stomach spoke He glanced first at Slakoff, as though for permission, and then went on rapidly and with many gesticulations.

"It may he," he pointed out, "that our ex-comrade, Anna Kastellane, hesitates because she has seen the fate of many of those donations in the early days of what I still boldly pronounce to be our Glorious Revolution. We have now a rudely constituted but a perfectly efficient State Bank to deal with such matters as these jewels. They will be converted into cash and they will pass into one of five accounts. That is to say, the money will be devoted toward the erection of schools in country places, the endowment of universities, the state-aided purchase of agricultural machinery, the payment of civil servants of the State or the rehuilding of houses as authorized by the Soviet Building Council.

Slakoff dipped a quill pen in the heavy inkstand which stood before him, and, smoothing out the paper which had been pressed into his hand, he drove it deliberately, scratching and spluttering, through her name. Beneath he wrote.

"Anna Kastellana is pardoned this day.

'(Signed) SLAKOFF."

He held it out to her. She glanced at it and looked back at him without understanding.

"The state does not bargain with individuals," Slakoff pronounced "It is not by such means that her councils rise to dignity and greatness We shall not offer you a free pardon for giving up what we claim is not your to keep That pardon is already given. We excuse your treachery, Anna Kastellane, on account of services already rendered to the state.

"We claim, however, that the Ostrekoff jewels belong to us, and we request that you make delivery of them."

There was a portentous silence Anna was bewildered The one man whose eyes she dared not meet were Slakoff's.

"Until tomorrow," she said at last, slowly, "I could not produce the jewels before then to save my life. Let me have until that time for consideration At any hour or place you may appoint after midday tomorrow, I will present myself with or without the jewels.

A murmur of criticism rose from the men seated around the table Slakoff disregarded it. He looked toward Anna.

"Boris Roussky will fetch you at the appointed hour," he directed "and may your choice be the right one"

"You will wait for me, then, Anna Kastellane," Boris Roussky enjoined.

Her eyes took small count of him She was looking across at Slakoff, and there was a beautiful smile upon her lips.

"I think that I shall do your bidding, Ivan Slakoff," she decided "But whether I do or not, you are a great man, and I only pray for Russia's sake that our people may keen you where you are."

This time there was a chorus of assent, for they knew that that prayer was needed

Anna shook her head when Boris Roussky would have ushered her into his car outside the great building in Aldwych.

"There is no need for me to inflict myself upon you any longer," she said. "It is barely 11 o'clock, and there are plenty of taxis on the stand there."

"I brought you here," he replied, "and I must beg of you to allow me the privilege of taking you back It is my duty as Slekoff's ambassador, It happens also to be my pleasure."

"Well, mine," she rejoined wearily, "would be to step into that taxicab and say good-by to all of you for the present. I want to think. I am too tired to argue. However, I suppose you must take me back if you insist."

"Anna Kastellane," he pleaded, "it is absolutely necessary that I talk with you, and what I have to say and what you must say in reply will take at least half an hour Will you ask me into your flat when we get there?"

"Will you come to my rooms for twenty minutes?" he begged.

"That," she assured him, "would be still more impossible"

"You need have no fear at all, I assure you," he promised. "The most I shall do is to make a business proposition to you. I am parched with thirst, and Slakoff will allow no wine at any of our meetings, nor any smoking. I shall tell my chauffeur to stop at Ciro's Club —we can sit up in the balcony there out of sight of everybody—and soon after midnight you can be back in Harford street."

"As you wish," she assented reluctantly.

He leaned across the table His long, nervous face was set in tense lines, his dark eyes were soft, his tone was convincing. He was slimly built, but manly enough in carriage. Women in all walks of life had found him attractive.

"Anna Kastellane," he began "you know little of me. To these men I am Boris Roussky, the lawyer. I have passed fine examinations. I have had a great reputation in the law courts, I am known as Boris Roussky the pleader Just an ordinary lawyer, you think, perhaps. I am not that One does not speak of one's birth, however, nowadays, I am ambitious, I am ambitious of Russia and for myself. I plunged heart and soul into this revolution I have had enough of it. The ship has got into the wrong hands We are drifting toward horrible disaster and my heart beats with sympathy at your words tonight."

"Yet very likely Slakoff knew what he was talking about," she meditated. You can only create by pulling down It seems terrible, but ha may he right. One may have to plow one's way through these awful things to reach the desired end."

"But the end of these men is not the desired end," Boris Roussky argued eagerly. "Look at their program. They would demolish everything. They would trample out religion. I am not a religious man, but with it would go all hope of ever becoming an artistic nation They are setting their heel on beauty wherever they find it, they are driving on toward a dreer mediocrity, they are trying to extinguished talent, to destroy individual mentality, to barbarize women. Anna Kastellane, it is time that we who have brains realize this."

He spoke like a man in earnest Notwithstanding her prejudices, she was interested.

"What can we do about it?" she asked. "It is too early to try to stem the torrent, one can only wait to see what is to happen."

"I am an individualist," he cried. "The measure of my country's greatness to me is the measure of greatness to which it can attain during my lifetime.

"Listen to me, Anna. There are some of them on the council who think well of me. I have been offered the post here of English representative, Minister or Ambassador, or whatever it may be. I will guarantee that I attain a larger measure of recognition from the British Government than any other man would Very well—ask yourself this—what finer center could there be in the world than London from which to secretly set out to remodel our country's future? We are of finer mold than these others. We have no real place in the present holocaust."

Anna sipped her wine and regarded her companion thoughtfully.

"You are being much more interesting than I expected you to be," she confessed Slekoff is a noble character and I feel that if he has his way this vile Sscret Service, from which every one suffers so much, will become purified. The last official word I had was that 40 of our friends have arrived here with forged passports. If there is one of them tonight who suspects your leanings you are probably being watched, as I have been ever since I went to Harford St."

He moved uneasily in his place.

"I would rather have spoken in your rooms or mine," he muttered, "but you were immovable."

"Let us change tables," she suggested, rising to her feet "There is an empty one farther down."

The move was made and they re-established themselves

"You had a reason for that?" he asked anxiously

"There was a little man behind us who might have been listening," she confided "Anyhow, we are completely out of earshot now. Go on, finish what you have to say The music and clatter downstairs will probably drown your voice."

"I can propose nothing definitely," he continued, "but this is what I suggest I go to Slakoff, tell him that I accept the position of Russian Minister, or whatever this coming Soviet Government likes to call me, to Great Britain I take a large house in the middle of the fashionable London and we entertain—as we should have every right to do."

"Who is we?" Anna asked, suddenly alert again.

"You and I," he replied, without hesitation "I propose that you marry me and bring as your dowry the Ostrekoff jewels. You create a salon and in that salon we plot for the restoration of the monarchy to Russia."

"You mean at that luncheon—the Grand Duke?" she exclaimed.

"Naturally You think I am raving, I dare say, but I know how sane I am. I could laugh at the tone of Bolsheviet propaganda which is in our cellars for distribution in this Country As soon as I am alone in power here it will go into the furnace."

"Do tell me," she begged, "in what country could you possibly make any definite movement in this matter?"

"In our own," he answered confidently. "Listen a little longer. What about Royalist propaganon in Petrograd and Moscow? What about holding out to the Russian public the return of the old gay life—money everywhere, the cafes and theaters all open in the old style, American capital pouring into the country, a sana Parliament with a limited monarchy like this. England knows how to govern, Anna Kastellane

"The only trouble is that she had no politicians with brains other than the brains of rabbits to do it for her."

"I very seldom," Anna declared, leaning back in her chair, "have been more interested in my life."

His face flamed with joy. She drew her hand away from the long, nervous fingers stretched out toward hers.

"I knew!" he murmured triumphantly. "I knew!"

She drank a little water and then suffered even her third glass of champagne to be poured out.

"Up to a certain point, you are a very clever man, Boris Roussky," she said. "But, understand me, please and attempt no arguments I shall speak in very plain words. First of all, your scheme would fail, because as a man you are exceedingly distasteful to me and I am already engaged to be married —very shortly I hope—to some one for whom I care more than I thought I could ever care for any one on earth"

Boris Roussky became very pale and there were drops of moisture on his forehead.

"The man from whom you stole the Ostrekoff jewels," he gasped.

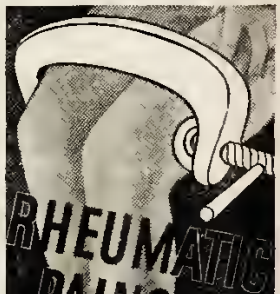
"Never mind. If I did, he will forgive me Now listen while I proceed I would take no part in such a scheme as you suggest because at the present moment, and to do it in the manner which you describe, would be treachery to Slakoff and those who may come after him. When a real, honest campaign for the overthrow of the Soviet power is started, I may have enthusiasm enough to join it or I may not. At present, you are ahead of your time.

"I am terribly and overpoweringly a woman. I am in love and the years of my life that are to come, that I see ahead of me now, shall be given to love and to being loved. That is just my answer to you, Boris Roussky. You have interested me more than ever I thought you could. I find something splendid in your scheme, notwithstanding its meanness. At the same time, I will have none of you I have not made up my mind yet, but I rather fancy that the Ostrekoff jewels will go to the Government we both hate"

"Because of the silver-tongued Slakoff," he muttered.

She lit another cigaret.

"Slakoff is a great man," she pronounced. "You and I both know that. He could have bargained with me for the Ostrekoff jewels with my life on one side of the scale, and he was too proud to do it Whatever happens," she added, rising to her feet, "I do not regret our con-



"Ben-Gay" penetrates deeper, stays in longer, routs pain quicker!

Don't be a slave to pain—kill it this quick way. Rub on "Ben-Gay," the *original* Baume Analgesique. Its hypo-sensitizing (pain relieving) action is sure because it penetrates through the skin into the muscles and the joints themselves.

Because "Ben-Gay" gives such relief, hoards af imitators have sprung up. They da not possess the same hyposensitizing and antipyretic action of "Ben-Gay." Look far the red "Ben-Gay" on the box—it's your guarantee. Don't suffer pain an hour longer.

RUB PAIN AWAY WITH

BAUME "BEN-GAY"

IT P-E-N-E-T-R-A-T-E-S

versation. I looked upon you as a very ordinary sort of person. I find that you have the makings of a magnificent schemer. You have a quality," she went on, as they passed down the stairs, "for which I never gave you credit. Perhaps in your profession it is a weakness—you are courageous to the point of rashness."

"Do you mean that I talk?" he broke in.

"I only surmise. I make no statement—except that I have a feeling that tonight we were followed and spied upon. From the first, I suspect that little man who was seated at the table near us and who looked as though he had been there all the evening. He had not. I saw him slip up the stairs ahead of us."

Boris Russky was disturbed and anxious. He had only just presence of mind enough to lift her hand to his lips.

"I have told the man to fetch you a taxicab," he said. "Very likely we shall meet tomorrow, wherever the meeting place is to be."

But when the meeting which he had in his mind should have taken place Boris Roussky was not present. He was lying on his back in the casualty ward of a great London hospital, and even at the inquest which was held in due course a few days later, there was no evidence produced as to how he came by the revolver bullet through the heart which had ended his life.

THE Ostrekoff jewels! There they lay, in wild profusion, spread out upon the library table of Wilfred Haven's house, in Grosvenor Square, display ? to the human eye for the first time since that young man had buckled the chamois belt around his body and locked the satchel attached to his wrist. They had fallen like a flowing cascade on to the table—jewels of all shapes and sizes and colors, from the flaming, wine-hued ruby or the lizard-green emerald to the flawless, scintillating white fire of a diamond.

In the background—a grim suggestion of the dangers with which their very existence was linked—stood two of Felix Drayton's men, alert and watchful. Farther away still, Felix Drayton himself watched and wondered, although he alone had any idea of what might take place.

There was not a person in the room who could look down upon that table's glittering burden unmoved. The silent drama of the display seemed to have fired even the blood of old Colonel Oliastransky, who stood gazing at the jewels with upraised hands, muttering to himself. Elisaveta was clinging feverishly to Haven's arm, her glorious eyes filled with a sort of iambent fire. The joy of the jewels seemed to have intoxicated her.

"Tell me again," she begged. "What happened? How did it come about that they were returned to you?"

"Ask Mr. Drayton," Haven replied. "He knows as much about it as I do."

"And that is not very much," Felix Drayton put in. "They were brought to my house at 11 o'clock this morning in an iron coffer. The manager of my own bank, in South Audley street, was with them and two of his clerks. I signed the receipt sent for some of my men and brought them around here."

"But I want to know who stole them," Elisaveta demanded, passionately. "How do we know that they are all here? There may be some missing."

"There are," an unexpected voice from the threshold declared. "Two emeralds. I sold them because—well I had to. One must live."

Anna Kasteliane stood there, with Siakoff leaning upon her arm.

"I told your man not to announce us, Wilfred," she continued. "I thought that our joint names might upset this little company.

"I have repented of my indiscretion you see," she continued, pointing to the table. "I restore to you your jewels, Wilfred. Your trust finishes here and now. It has brought you all the adventure you want I should think, for the rest of your life."

The newcomers meant nothing to Elisaveta, except that she realized this must be the girl who had shared Haven's precious journeys and of whom from the first she had been vaguely jealous.

"So this was the mysterious thief!" she cried. "Well, that is all over now. You will not have to part with your money, after all, Wilfred. Let us put them back into the iron box. Afterward, will you come to the bank with Colonel Oliastransky and me and Mr Drayton? Your trust will be over then. We must sell a great many of them because we have not any money, but I shall have some made up. We will choose together."

She leaned toward the table but Anna, who had been busy establishing Siakoff in a chair, turned around.

"Not quite so fast, please," she begged. "It is true, Wilfred," she added, turning to him, "that your trust is over. You have brought these jewels, through many dangers, to Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff from her father and mother. That is so, is it not?"

"It certainly is," Haven assented. "Trust or no trust, I'm mighty glad to get rid of them. Pack them up, Elisaveta, and take them round to the bank."

Anna Kasteliane laughed softly. She laid her hand affectionately upon his shoulder.

"A bank, I think would be a very good place," she said, "but first of all, you must let me thank you. I know better than any one what you have been through in order to keep your trust."

"What are you talking about?" Elisaveta interrupted, with a sudden bewildered fear dawning in her eyes.

"I am trying to thank Mr Haven," Anna Kasteliane replied, "for having brought me the jewels from my father and mother. I am the Princess Elisaveta Ostrekoff. Who are you?"

There was an astonished and spellbound silence, broken only by the sound of Madame Oliastransky's voice in the background. No one in the room was more completely astonished than Haven.

"If you want to know your history," Anna added, turning not unkindly to the girl by her side, "ask Colonel and Madame Oliastransky."

Colonel Oliastransky had been born a gentleman and served his life as a soldier. His withered hands were shaking, his eyes, in which had always lurked the shadow of some fear, were closed now in a sort of convulsive horror. He spoke as though with a sob in his throat.

"The child is your sister," he muttered. "She has a right to something."

"The child, as you call her, has had a great deal," Anna reminded him gravely. "As Elisaveta is her sixth name and my first—a confusing custom, that of giving the same name to Russian children of the same family—I shall now call her Vera, which is her first name, and, as it is no longer necessary for me to conceal my identity.

"It is by the name of Elisaveta Ostrekoff that I desire to be known. Vera, you had a very large sum of money settled upon you, some of which I am afraid your guardians have misapplied. They have lived too near the gambling centers of the world."

The colonel sank into a chair.

"We had £100,000," he confessed. "Some of that we have spent on Vera, the rest we stole—we must call it that."

"We had to live," Madame Oliastransky moaned. "One hundred thousand pounds does not last for ever. It was not we who came to her. The agent of this Mr. Felix Drayton found us out. There was a great fortune, he said, arrived from Petrograd for Elisaveta Ostrekoff. Vera's name was also Elisaveta—why should not the fortune have been for her?"

"You need have no fear," Elisaveta assured them calmly. "I will tell you now, if you like, what the fate of this great fortune is to be."

They were all looking at the table, at the heterogeneous mass of jewels, strange flashing pieces of iridescence that means so much.

"I have received an offer of £3,500,000 for the jewels," Elisaveta continued, "from a syndicate which has been formed in Hatton Gardens. The half a million I shall divide between Vera here and myself, and the remainder goes into the hands of my friend, Ivan Siakoff, to be devoted by him to the cause of Russian progress."

There was a universal murmur of amazement.

"Anna, I mean Elisaveta, does not need the money, anyway," Wilfred Haven declared. "She will have plenty, if——" he added, with a little grimace—"I can ever screw up sufficient courage to marry a Princess."

"NORTH SHORE"

by

Wallace Irwin

A Complete $2.00 Book Length Novel

Will Appear in

NEXT SUNDAY'S FREE PRESS

Dec. 10th

A vital, powerful story of love, romance and modern girlhood told in brilliant paragraphs

Be Sure to Get a Copy of

NEXT SUNDAY'S FREE PRESS

Another Fine Pulp
scanned and edited by:
CIMMERIAN3-BR

Paper rots, digital
is forever.
Preserve your pulps today.

If you would like to join
our group,
please visit us at
http://www.technogrammaton.org/forum/index.php